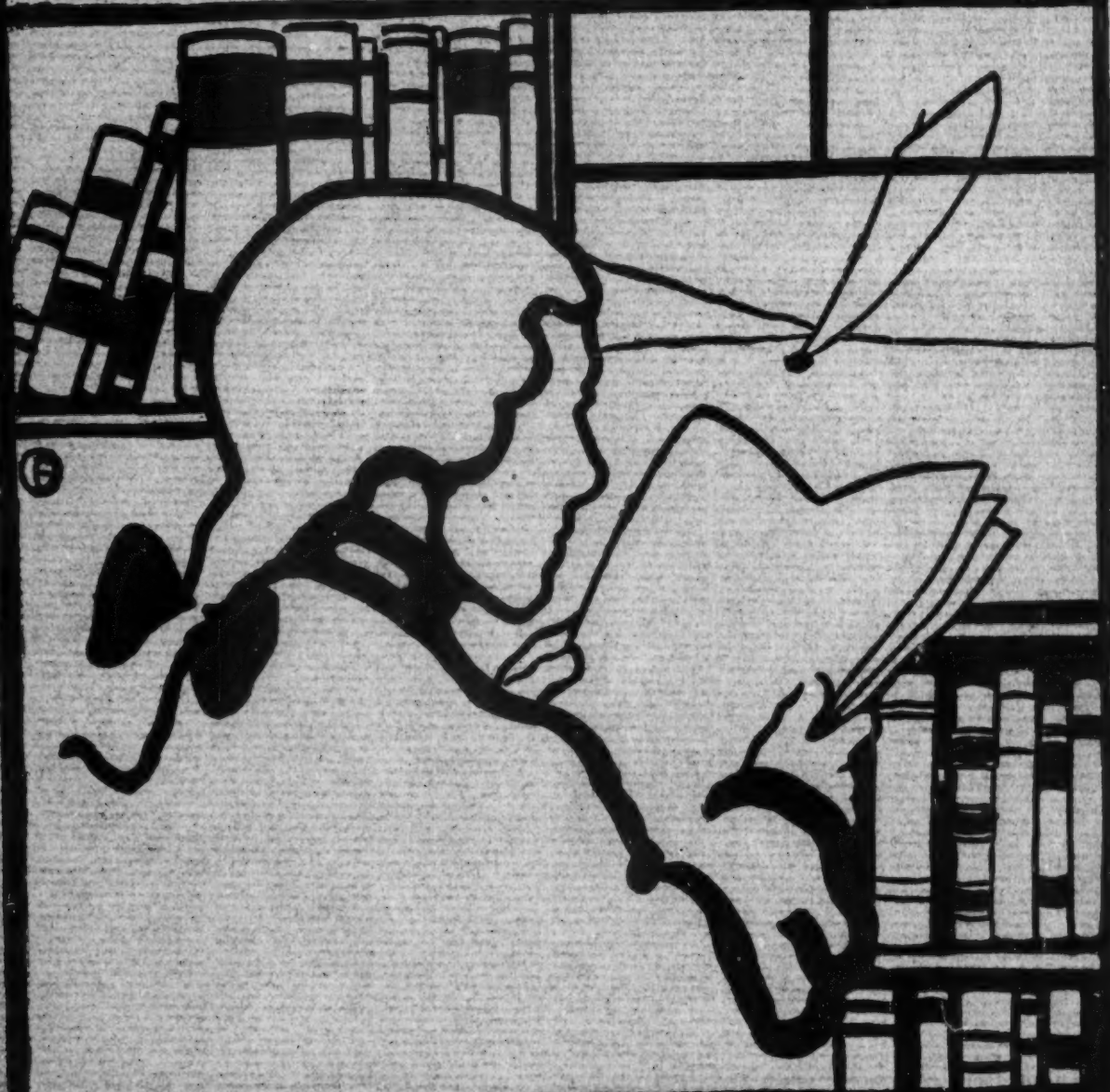


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The Academy



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The Literary Week.

THE usual post-Christmas lull has fallen on the book world. How complete it is may be judged by the fact that not a single new novel lies on our table. The novels of 1902 are being written. Solemn thought!

LORD ROSEBERY'S Chesterfield speech is issued in pamphlet form by Mr. A. L. Humphreys, with a slight prefatory note, in which the speaker claims to have subjected it to "mild supervision." Personally we prefer speeches as they were delivered. The note also asks that "Spadework" (Lord Rosebery cannot get away from metaphor of the soil) be now contributed by others to make the policy of the speech a fact, "or else the wave [new metaphor!] of popular adhesion to it will be lost in space." In space.

THE writer of "Musing Without Method," by the way—in *Blackwood's Magazine*—has an amusing transition from his remarks on Lord Rosebery's speech to those on Mr. Mowbray Morris's *Tales of the Spanish Main*. Why a musér without method should be at such pains to join his flats we cannot see. To him before all men a little abruptness would be permitted. But no; he cannot pass from Lord Rosebery to Mr. Morris without this ligament:

But, after all, of what avail is the eloquence of politicians? At its most brilliant, it is but a jugglery, which deceives the ear of the people, until in a brief space its effect is forgotten.

Then follow ten more lines to the same purpose; and then:

Two or three words thrown together at a seeming hazard may produce a result, by memorable association, which eludes many hours of painful eloquence. "Those three little words, *the Spanish Main*," says Mr. Mowbray Morris in the most agreeable of the Christmas books.

And the new subject is in full swing. The hard thing is that Lord Rosebery, who has had his dressing down from the musér in his own paragraph, thus comes in for a supplementary flout in Mr. Morris's. And a big proposition is used as a little stepping-stone.

"WE laugh ('we that have good wits')," says Mr. Lang in *Longman's Magazine*, "at the *Love-Letters of an Englishwoman*. A French correspondent informs me that they have a great vogue in Paris, but are thought rather dangerous and inflammatory; like *Tom Jones*, which was suppressed under Louis XV., that eminently moral ruler."

NATURE and Henrietta Street abhor a vacuum. This week Mr. Grant Richards leaves this street for Leicester Square, where he will occupy premises cheek by jowl with Sir Joshua Reynolds's old house. Meanwhile into

Henrietta Street flow Messrs. M. T. C. and E. C. Jack, of Edinburgh, who are opening a London office at No. 84. Messrs. Jack's head office remains at Edinburgh.

COMMENCING with the January issue, which is now ready, the *Contemporary Review* is to be published by Messrs. Horace Marshall and Son.

SPEAKING from the chair at the ladies' dinner of the New Vagabonds' Club last week Mrs. Craigie dealt pithily with "an unaccountable association in the popular mind between a writer and her heroines." How this may work, and does actually work, in the careers of women writers she set forth by a few facts derived from personal knowledge. Mrs. Craigie related:

A blameless lady of my acquaintance, who takes a large view of humanity and writes stories which are described as powerful, was asked the other day, by an earnest inquirer, whether she really intended to leave her excellent husband, her delightful children, and join a rapturous violinist on the Continent. The earnest inquirer went on to say that he hoped the rumour was based on some misapprehension. I hasten to add, it was. Another friend of mine, singularly handsome, happy, and accomplished, wrote a romance. Her husband occupies an important public post. She is herself the daughter of a distinguished politician. Well, she wrote, as I have said, a romance; it was very clever, absolutely lifelike. She read it to her sisters. They all agreed that it was admirable; they said they wouldn't wonder if the book showed genius, but they all agreed that it could not be published. Why not? Because, said the sisters, everyone will think it is about all of us—and that will never do; and they will say you are in love with somebody, and are going to do something foolish. So my accomplished young friend has decided to publish under some such name as Samuel E. Tompkins, and on this understanding her family think she may yet be presumed to enjoy a normal degree of felicity, and the ordinary number of nice relations.

But although there is a ridiculous side to the matter, there is also a very serious one. It places a severe tax upon all originality; it leads to an acute personal note in reviewing which in no way assists life. We know how that the attacks on Charlotte Brontë—the curious confusion of herself with her female characters—dismayed her sensitive genius, and certainly affected her view of human politeness. George Eliot and Mrs. Browning met with similar treatment. If there be any foundation in fact for the Bacon-Shakespeare alliance, one can explain it by the desire on the part of any observer, or creator, to remain eternally outside the combat. It is unreasonable for readers to suppose that an author approves and holds up for example every type of character which he or she may describe. For instance, if any well-known Academician should paint "*Ariadne Forsaken*," it would not be assumed that it conveyed any sinister hint to the world at large that he intended to

abandon his wife. But when we come to a book or a play—signed by a woman's name—the case is altered. She is not supposed to care instinctively for literature: one infers that she falls back upon it, as it were, as a distraction from unhappiness, or because she wants to do good, or because she wishes to make mischief. Plain facts, without comment, from a woman are considered very alarming indeed. This is why she is too often driven, in mere self-defence, to frame her narrative in solid moralising. She may perhaps tell anything she pleases, but she must make it quite clear on every page that she is pained and shocked by the moral instability of mankind and the disastrous fascination of her own deplorable sex.

The immediate application of Mrs. Craigie's remarks lay in their bearing on the guest of the evening, Mrs. Harrison (Lucas Malet), whose *History of Sir Richard Calmady* has been in some quarters regarded with a kind of pious dismay. "I do not believe," said Mrs. Craigie, in defence of her comrade in Letters, "that human nature has anything to lose by being known, and thoroughly known; on the contrary, unkindness and want of charity arise from knowing it too little. This is why novels should not be composed in order to fill idle hours with false pictures and false ideas. They should widen our range of sympathies; help us to understand natures alien to our own; in other words, they should be an education of the heart."

THE Shakespeare-Bacon controversy has now raged sufficiently long for progress to be reported. The chief antagonists have become Mr. Sidney Lee and Mr. W. H. Mallock, with other sharp-shooters on neighbouring kopjes. Mr. Lee's attitude is unqualified disgust at the Baconian theory; Mr. Mallock's is humorous apathy. Mr. Lee places Mr. Mallock's position in the following parable:

When one person asserts that certain scratches which he pretends to find on the walls of Westminster Abbey bring him to the conclusion that that building is the Tower of London, and when another person declares that, though he has not himself seen or tried to see the scratches on the Abbey walls, yet the irresponsible and unsupported assertion that they are there is sufficient ground for instituting a full inquiry respecting the Abbey's identity with the Tower of London, few will think it worth while to distinguish very narrowly between the two declarations or between the two persons making them. Mr. Mallock emphatically adopts the second declaration at the same time as he carefully explains that he has not made the first.

Mr. Mallock—in quite the best of the letters, technically—writes thus of Mr. Lee's point of view:

But what strikes me principally in this controversy is the odd sentimental acerbity with which the upholders of Shakespeare's authorship receive the arguments of those who presume to entertain a doubt of it. Shakespeare is a figure of interest to us only because we assume him to have written the works that bear his name. What we know of him otherwise tends to quench interest rather than arouse it. What reason is there, other than the most foolish form of school-girl sentiment, for resenting the idea of a transference of our admiration of the author of the plays from a man who is personally a complete stranger to all of us—or at best a not very reputable acquaintance—to a man who is universally admitted to be one of the greatest geniuses who have ever appeared at any period of the world's history?

MEANWHILE, no steps seem to be taken to appoint a committee to test Mrs. Gallup's theory. Mrs. Gallup adheres to Boston with the tenacity of a Lord Salisbury at Beaulieu; and the *Times* is readable. We commend the notice of Mr. Josiah Ritchie, of the Aquarium, to the dead-lock. Mrs. Gallup would be at least as interesting a draw as the fasting lady, and the sittings of a committee as a Ping Pong tournament.

THREE of the sharp-shooters have made excellent points. Mr. Marston discovered that if Bacon wrote any translation of Homer at all, it was, by Mrs. Gallup's own showing, Pope's, and not Chapman's; Mr. Skeat also sweetly has it that Bacon in the cipher used a word "heading" in a sense not invented until the middle of the last century; and Professor Silvanus Thompson suggests that we need more evidence before we agree that Bacon was also a compositor. But the average person is tired of the whole thing, just as he is tired of any other continually-recurring canard. A little monologue on the subject, which we publish elsewhere in this number, expresses at least one phase of this reluctance. After all, as Shakespeare, or Bacon, or Mrs. Gallup, says, "the plays are the thing."

MRS. GALLUP has, of course, her imitators. A correspondent of a provincial newspaper has just discovered that "spelling Shakespeare without the final e we find there are four vowels and six consonants. Writing these numbers down we get forty-six. Now turn to the Forty-sixth Psalm, and the forty-sixth word from the beginning is found to be 'shake'; count forty-six from the end and the word 'spear' is found. Thus it appears that the word Shakespear may have been coined from this source." Unfortunately for this architectonic theory, there were many "Shakespeares" before Shakespeare.

THE presence in the January *Century Magazine* and in *Cornhill* of the same article on Thackeray in America may strike purchasers of both magazines as too much of a good thing. Meanwhile, it leads to the reflection that if ever the irony of fate enveloped a good man's wish it is in the case of Thackeray. We are continually assured by those who ought to know that Thackeray's particular desire was to be allowed to escape the biographer. And the direct biographical works, and the oblique biographical works (such as Mrs. Ritchie's notes to the novels) of which he has been the subject are beyond our enumeration. Thackeray evidently, if he really meant it, took too little count of publishers' enterprise.

MR. JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, the American homely poet, in what is called the Hoosier dialects, contributes to the *Century Magazine* a sequence of children's poems. Here is one of a seasonable character:

A GUSTATORY MEMORY.

Last Thanksgivin'-dinner we
Et at Granny's house, an' she
Had—ist like she allus does—
Most an' best pies ever wuz.

Canned blackburry pie an' goose-
Burry, squishin'-full o' juice;
An' rozburry—yes, an' plum—
Yes, an' churru-pie—um-yum!

Peach an' punkin, too, you bet.
Lawzy! I kin taste 'em yet!
Yes, an' custard-pie, an' mince!

An'—I—ain't—et—no—pie—since!

THE Hon. Sec. of the Elizabethan Society, Toynbee Hall, writes:—"Would you allow me to point out to any of your readers who may be inspired by your admirable article, 'The Elizabethan Rostands,' to extend their acquaintance with the drama of Shakespeare's contemporaries, that they will be welcome at our meetings, which are held every Wednesday evening, at 8 o'clock, at Toynbee Hall, Commercial Street, E.? On the first Wednesday of every month a paper is read, generally by some well-known authority, and the other meetings are devoted to the reading of plays."

MR. W. HALE WHITE sends an interesting note on "Tolstoy's Astronomy" to the *Athenæum*. In Mrs. Garnett's translation of *Anna Karénin*, vol. 1 p. 185, there is a description of snipe-shooting in a spring evening, and

Venus, bright and silvery, shone with her soft light low down in the west behind the birch-trees, and high up in the east twinkled the red lights of Arcturus. . . . Levin resolved to stay a little longer, till Venus, which he saw below a branch of birch, should be above it. . . . Venus had risen above the branch.

On this Mr. White pithily comments: "Something might be said about the red Arcturus high up in the east, but I will pass that by. The printer is not at fault in putting west for east, because Venus could not be in the east at sunset. I have asked an authority in Russian if this extraordinary astronomy is to be found in the original of *Anna Karénin*, and it appears that the translation is literal. It is a pity that Mrs. Garnett did not append a note explaining that the mistake was not hers. The list of blunders made by literary people when they describe the sky at night would be a long one, and they do but reflect the general ignorance. It is strange and sad that few persons nowadays can recognise the constellations and the planets." They mistake them even in literature.

We have noticed before now the pseudo-Whitmanesque reviewing that holds revel in the pages of the *Philadelphia Conservator*. We do not know who "T." of the *Conservator* may be, but his signature occurs sometimes six times on a page, and his criticisms, whatever their own merits, are often glorified evasions of the matter in hand. "T." goes on month after month, year after year. We rather like him. He has a way of calling authors by their surnames that is all the quainter because it is often the only apparent link between critic and author. Mr. Lafcadio Hearn has published *A Japanese Miscellany*. "T.'s" review amounts to this:

Each time we welcome a book from Hearn we feel anew and with greater certitude how much the East and West belong to each other. . . . Hearn has acquired the syllables of an adopted beauty. Or, to speak with more respect for him, has seemed to recognise them as his own. He could not so easily have absorbed the new old world if its primordial life had not first planted its roots in him. He was Oriental while here. He was not required to cross the Pacific to discover the Orient. . . . Unlike Stevenson, who went off somewhere or anywhere, but was always the Anglo-Saxon, Hearn has shed all his parochial plumage and asserted a conclusive internationalism. A few such informing intelligences planted in misunderstood places about the globe would bring the nations quickly together. Let us dismiss all ambassadors and consuls, and substitute evangels of Hearn's order. . . . I sit in amaze before the book, not seeing its pages, yet seeing through its pages to an exquisite revelation. Hearn is an ambassador extraordinary doing a service primarily for two races, and accordingly for all.

We are inclined to believe that "T." was literally blind to the book before him, for there is not a word about it in his review. But then "T." deals in the impalpable, and to please him thoroughly a book must resemble Mr. Henry Wood's *The Symphony of Life*, of which recently-published work "T." says:

His book seems without letter. It is spirit—atmosphere: it is light, light again, and then again light. If natures addicted to formula and a b c could realise this symphony they would find themselves provoked to discovery and capable of raptures and reassurances impossible to their former estate. Wood is a priest without vestments. He pronounces a gospel without words. He leads you, yet does not touch your hand.

MR. JULIAN CROSKY has ere now written with pessimistic vivacity on the hardships of the literary life. Others have done it. Now, he briskly sends us the annual "Book Number" of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, a prodigious budget of American literary news and comment, in which his own share is a large one. There is very much in this well-edited and all but overwhelming supplement that interests us. A man might read it and go to bed in it. We have heard a good deal this autumn of the over-production of books, due to special causes. In America this over-production is more serious and its causes more permanent. The *Eagle* says:

The first thing to attract attention is the enormous number of books published and the extent to which the output is consumed by the reading public. Within the easy recollection of the older generation of book-lovers the book which attained a sale of, say 20,000 copies, within a year or two of its appearance, was thought to have scored a decided success. Now, the book that does not promptly reach double that figure is counted almost a failure, while those that reach editions of from 30,000 to 50,000 are regarded as only fairly successful. What all the publishers are looking after are "record sellers"—books that mount way up to the 100,000 or 250,000 mark. Those which only attain to the first-named figures are counted as of the second rank. That these tremendous sales—so utterly beyond the wildest dreams of the authors of even a decade ago—have had a demoralising effect on both author and publisher is not to be questioned. It has happened that in a number of instances the books that have reached the front rank as "sellers" are the work of authors previously unknown. The result is that there has been a tremendous rush on the part of unproved writers into the field of fiction, with all sorts of crude and raw novels—some utterly worthless, but others presenting some shades of merit—if haply they might capture a place in the front rank and secure the rich gains which reward such an achievement. On the other side the publisher—equally anxious to score a phenomenal success and reap the resulting profit, has "taken chances" and published books of doubtful merit in the hope that they might catch the public fancy and score a large success. A result has been the cumbering of our tables with a mass of books of so ephemeral a quality that they are forgotten to-morrow.

OTHER features of the publishing year in America are set forth with such beacon-like plainness in displayed headings, that we are tempted to quote a few of the latter as they stand. Here they are:

REGULARLY PUBLISHED FICTION FOR THE YEAR 536 VOLUMES.

These Were Written by 467 Authors of Whom 50 Produced More Than One Work—"Historical" Romance, the Reigning Fad Shows Signs of Declining.

ISSUE OF "NATURE BOOKS" A REMARKABLE GROWTH.

More Than a Hundred Such Works Have Been Placed on the Market the Past Year by American Publishers—A Development that is Thoroughly Wholesome.

WORKS ON RELIGION SHOW A RENAISSANCE OF CALVINISM.

Cause, in Part, at Least, the Successful Agitation for a Revision of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith—Higher Criticism Shows a Tendency Toward a Broader View.

SCHOLARSHIP NOW LAVISHED UPON BIOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH.

Tendency is a Manifestation of the Passion for Specialization in the Intellectual Activity of the Time—Numerous Valuable Monographs in the Year's Literary Output.

TWO-THIRDS OF THE BEST SELLING BOOKS WERE
PUBLISHED IN NEW YORK.

Boston Was a Very Poor Second, While Philadelphia Published
Six and Chicago Published Four of the Most Popular
One Hundred Novels of the Year.

OF THE 2,000 WHO PUBLISHED BOOKS HALF CAN
CLAIM TO BE AUTHORS.

In this Long List Something Like 646 Obtained, Perhaps, Some
Fair Remuneration, Others Had to Content Themselves
With the Glory of Seeing Their Names in Print.

The American heading has its points, though Americans
do call it a "caption."

MR. GEORGE GISSING's forthcoming book, *An Author at Grass*, is evidently not quite so light and airy in subject as its title might imply. According to the *Bookman*, it "gives the history of a life with graphic force," although "not a story in the ordinary sense." We are glad to learn that Mr. Gissing's health is much better, and in the South of Europe, where he is spending the winter, he hopes for complete recovery.

In the January number of *Harper's Magazine* Mark Twain has "A Double-barrelled Detective Story," which he will complete next month. Its first chapter is headed:

WE OUGHT NEVER TO DO WRONG WHEN PEOPLE ARE
LOOKING.

The fourth is headed:

NO REAL GENTLEMAN WILL TELL THE NAKED TRUTH
IN THE PRESENCE OF LADIES.

We hope we shall yet see Mark Twain's own book of maxims.

Bibliographical.

THE reviewers already have in their hands the new *Life* of the First Napoleon, by Mr. J. Holland Rose, which is not to be issued publicly until the 13th inst. As Mr. Rose truly says in his preface: "An apology seems to be called for from any one who gives to the world a new *Life* of Napoleon I." The literature in English on this subject is already sufficiently big and bewildering. Even setting aside all books which (like Lord Rosebery's) deal only with phases of Napoleon's life and character, there is still a small library of Napoleonic biography in our language. It seems as if it were only the other day that Mr. Milligan Sloane produced his elaborate work on Napoleon (1896-97). The year 1896 was indeed truly Napoleonic, for it brought forth also a couple of monographs by Mr. Baring Gould and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, to say nothing of versions of the "memoirs" by Constant and by Doris. The year 1895, again, witnessed a resuscitation of the venerable *Historic Doubts*, by Whately. To 1894 belongs a translation of Dumas' *Napoleon*. In 1893 Mr. O'Connor Morris published a monograph on the subject. In 1890 Hazlitt's biography was reprinted. Going back to 1886, we arrive at the English edition of Lanfrey's great work and at Professor Seeley's study of Napoleon; to 1884 and 1882 respectively belong new editions of the biographies by Macfarlane and Lockhart; and in 1883 came the *Life* by J. S. C. Abbott, of which there was a new edition so recently as 1899.

"While not neglecting the personal details of the great man's life, I have dwelt," says Mr. Rose elsewhere in his preface, "mainly on his public career. Apart from his brilliant conversations, his private life has few features of abiding interest." This has not been the opinion of the gossips, who have, in fact, revelled in the details, accurate

or inaccurate, of the great man's idiosyncrasies and domesticities. Take, for example, the following books, all published in English in the same year—1894:—F. Masson's *Napoleon at Home*, *Napoleon as Lover and Husband*, and *Napoleon and the Fair Sex*; and A. Levy's *Private Life of Napoleon*. Among the decade's books on different sections and aspects of Napoleon's career, one may name the new edition of Thiers's *Consulate and Empire of Napoleon* (1893), *Napoleon's First Campaign*, by Sargent (1895), Lord Wolseley's *Decline and Fall of Napoleon* (1895), Ussher and Glover's *Napoleon's Last Voyage* (1895), *Napoleon's Military Career*, by Gibbs (1895), *Napoleon's Birthplace and Childhood*, by Howell (1896), *Napoleon's Opera Glass*, by Rosen (1896), Seaton's *Sir H. Lore and Napoleon* (1898), *Napoleon's Invasion of Russia*, by George (1899), *Napoleon's Maxims*, by Henry (1899), and *Napoleon's Mother*, by Tschudi (1900).

We are told to expect a new book by Miss Elizabeth Phelps entitled *Within the Gates*. No particulars are given, but it is permissible to assume that the volume will be connected in some way with Miss Phelps's existing works, *The Gates Ajar*, *Beyond the Gates*, and *The Gates Between*, which, I take it (though open to correction), have a close affinity. A new and cheap edition of *The Gates Ajar* came out in 1890. To what extent, I wonder, are Miss Phelps's other books known in England? Her *Donald Marcy* was reprinted in 1899, her *Madonna of The Tub* in 1895, her *Doctor Zay* in 1890. Then there are her *Story of Aris* (1889), her *Number Thirteen and other Stories* (1890), her *Fourteen to One* (1891), her *Supply at St. Agatha's* (1896), her *Singular Life* (1896), and her *Loveliness* (1899). Her *Gypsy Breyton* (1894) is, I suppose, own brother to her *Gipsy's Sowing and Reaping* (1896), and *Gipsy's Year at the Golden Crescent* (1897).

Mr. Leland is said to be preparing a complete edition of his *Breitmann's Ballads*. Is it to be final as well as complete? If there is any likelihood of Mr. Leland's adding by-and-by to the number of the *Ballads*, let him not give us a "complete" edition now. We are quite ready to wait for that benefaction. Breitmann's latest appearance, if I remember rightly, was in a book which portrayed him in Germany and the Tyrol (1895). The latest "complete" edition of the *Ballads* dates back, I fancy, to 1884. The edition of the *Ballads* published by Trübner in 1899 was both a neat and a handy one.

My list, last week, of books whose titles during the past ten years have rung the changes upon the word "Christmas" did not profess to be complete. A correspondent, however, suggests that I should add to the list *A Right Merrie Christmase*, a quarto volume by Mr. John Ashton, published in December, 1894. This (so comprehensive is it) might very well have been called *All About Christmas*, the seductive name which (as I noted) has been given by a lady to a forthcoming book.

The English version of Jæger's book on Ibsen, reviewed in last week's *ACADEMY*, is not the first which has been circulated in this country. Rather more than eleven years ago a translation which had been first issued in Chicago was published in London, and had a certain measure of vogue. This interesting memoir might very well be brought down to date by somebody.

Mr. Austin Dobson, it is said, is to annotate his "Beau Brocade" when that poem makes its appearance in Mr. Lobban's forthcoming *School Anthology*. If Mr. Dobson were to annotate his volume of *Collected Poems* as fully as it is in his power to do, how great would be the instruction and entertainment of the reader!

Miss Agnes Weld, who is announced as at work on an anecdotal memoir of her uncle, the late Lord Tennyson, will be remembered as the author of some reminiscences of the poet, contributed to one of the *Reviews* at the time of his death.

THE BOOKWORM.

Reviews.

Mrs. Meynell's Later Poems.

Later Poems. By Alice Meynell. (Lane. 2s. 6d. net.)

CERTAINLY Mrs. Meynell is the most reticent of singers. Thirty-seven *Preludes* in 1875, a reprint of these in 1893, with seven pieces added in place of five rejected; and now, in 1901, nineteen *Later Poems*—that is her tale of verse for a quarter of a century. How does this compare with the fluent ladies of the magazines, who will "rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping hours excepted"? We would not have it otherwise. This little volume was worth waiting for. From cover to cover there is not a poem to wish away. It is all of fine gold—

A box where sweets compacted lie.

Mrs. Meynell, we imagine, never forces her songs, hardly invites them even; but is content to brood long over deep pools of poetic thought and emotion, until suddenly the song emerges from the waters, ready to shake its wings and soar. The only deliberate element in its fashioning is that exquisite sense of the inter-relations of words which we call style, and the function of style is only to preserve the pristine purity of the miracle. Style Mrs. Meynell has in an extraordinary degree. Every one of her poems says exactly what it means. There is no word superfluous or lacking, no wheel that jars in the gate as she drives forth, no harshness in the mouth of the instrument to mar the perfect simplicity and directness of the utterance. Nor is the thing said ever unworthy to be said in this divine way.

The present writer finds a difficulty in approaching his task from a critical standpoint. These poems have moved and stirred him more deeply than any others read for the first time in recent years, with the possible exception of "A Shropshire Lad." That is, of course, a matter in part of subjective psychology, and not only of objective art. Who shall say why this or that collocation of words or pigments knocks at the heart-strings, whilst others, probably in themselves as dynamic, go unheard or are confessed with the intellect alone. But, even allowing for the personal equation, it is hard to discover a critical test which Mrs. Meynell's work will not endure. Do you look first of all in poetry for the note of individual emotion? You will find it here, both in its religious and in its human form.

Home, home from the horizon far and clear,
Hither the soft wings sweep;
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near
The dovecot doors of sleep.

O which are they that come through sweetest light
Of all these homing birds?
Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?
Your words to me, your words!

Do you wish for anything more intimate or more poignant? Or is poetry to be in the first place the voicing of high ideals, a criticism of life? Mrs. Meynell's is that also, in the exquisite lines on "The Shepherdess," which originally appeared, we believe, under the title of "The Lady of the Lambs," in Mr. Lucas's anthology, *The Open Road*, or in these on "The Lady Poverty":

The Lady Poverty was fair:
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah, slattern, she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes. She keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or—almost worse, if worse can be—
She scolds in parlours; dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free,
Who with Obedience carolled hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity?

Where is her ladyhood? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees the skies appear;
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.

Is a lilting rhythm the desideratum? Catch the rhythm of "Chimes." Or a fine perception of delightful external circumstance? It was a trained and discriminating eye that saw into the secret of "November Blue."

O, heavenly colour! London town
Has blurred it from her sk'es;
And hooded in an earthly brown,
Unheaven'd the city lies.
No longer standard-like this hue
Above the broad road flies;
Nor does the narrow street the blue
Wear, slender pennon-wise.

But when the gold and silver lamps
Colour the London dew,
And, misted by the winter damps,
The shops shine bright anew—
Blue comes to earth, it walks the street,
It dyes the wide air through;
A mimic sky about their feet,
The throng go crowned with blue.

The hostile critic would probably make it a point against Mrs. Meynell that she misses the wider appeal. It is quite true. But, then, is it not quite true also that poetry itself misses the wider appeal; so that it is mainly a question of degree after all. Certainly Mrs. Meynell's mind moves in realms to which the plain man, even if not absolutely verse-deaf, has some difficulty in accustoming himself. One could conceive him, for instance, a little baffled by the following:

Why wilt thou chide,
Who hast attained to be denied?
Oh learn, above
All price is my refusal, Love.
My sacred Nay
Was never cheapened by the way.
Thy single sorrow crowns thee lord
Of an unpurchasable word.

Oh strong, oh pure!
As Yea makes happier loves secure,
I vow thee this
Unique rejection of a kiss.
I guard for thee.
This jealous sad monopoly.
I seal this honour thine. None dare
Hope for a part in thy despair.

There is nothing so much beyond the reach of your plain man as the kind of truth which finds its most natural expression in a paradox. Yet it is none the less truth. It is legitimate to protest against the extension of a poet's appeal being taken as a measure of his poetry. Primarily poetry is a purely subjective thing—the expression of emotion for the sake of the relief or heightening of the emotion which the expression gives. The fact that the expression of the emotion becomes at the same time the means of transmitting it to the consciousness of others is almost accidental. From the outside the critic of poetry, as of all other art, looks to the greater or less perfection with which it is transmitted, as well as to its intrinsic quality. But the number of the minds to which it is transmitted is irrelevant. One does not object to a Marconi

message, that only one apparatus has been rigged up capable of receiving it. What is essential in poetry is, firstly, that it should be charged with emotion, and, secondly, that the moods of this emotion should have æsthetic or ethical value. They may be exceptional and remote, or they may be common and broadly human. It is all one, critically. But on the presence of emotion one must insist. A recent writer, to whom some look for critical guidance, complains that "beyond personal feeling, into the region of observation and speculation, the poetess seldom strays." Assuredly it is so, under penalty of ceasing to be a poetess. This indeed is the crowning merit of Mrs. Meynell's work that, although it is highly intellectualised, the result of subtle and analytic meditation, it yet remains emotional. It is the register, not of mere thoughts, but of a personal attitude towards thoughts.

Some Sense-Histories.

The Oxford English Dictionary: Lap-Leisurely. By Henry Bradley. (Clarendon Press. 5s.)

It is in its presentation of the sense-histories of English words that this great lexicon triumphs so conspicuously over all others. You are enabled to trace the life of a word from source to sea. Not that this progression is always simple and graduated. Meanings overlap and co-exist in the most curious way, one running ahead of another, to be itself overtaken. But the material for conceiving the psychological growth of a word's senses is placed before you in unstinted quantity, and in the best illustrative order possible. Take the substantive, "lapse." Derived, of course, from the Latin *lapsus*, it is used by 16th and 17th century writers in the meaning of a trivial slip, a slight error or mistake. "Anone by lapse of tonge they ronne in to inconuenyentes" is Wynken de Worde's use of it, and Guillim writes in his *Heraldry*: "Lest they fall into the Laps of the iteration or doubling of any prohibited words." Here, again, a mere slip is indicated. Yet the 17th century was not out before the word came to connote a disastrous error. You stand right between the two meanings in the following quotations, separated in time by only seventeen years:

Not Heresies in me, but bare Errors, and single lapses of my understanding. (Sir Thomas Browne, 1643.)

Suspecting our selves not to have emerged quite out of this General Apostasy of the Church, into which the Spirit of God has foretold she would be lapsed for 1260 years; let us see if we can find out what Remainers of this Lapse are still upon us. (Henry More, 1660.)

Could sense-development be more strikingly illustrated? But while More was intensifying the meaning of lapse, other writers were content to use it still in its weaker meaning. Thus in 1674 Dryden has: "'Tis unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of a Pen, from which Virgil himself stands not excepted"—a precept for critics of all time. And to this day we use the word in its weak and strong meanings. We say "a lapse of memory" and we say "a lapse of faith." We use the word to denote a slip from which recovery is almost automatic, and a slip from which recovery is well-nigh hopeless. Then, again, the quality of the slip has been differently sensed. In its earlier uses a lapse was a sudden slip—a stumble; yet the word came to mean the most gentle of downward motions when applied physically as to water.

About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams

says Adam in "Paradise Lost"; and this development is

even more striking in Cowper's attempt to realise a snow-fall:

The downy flakes
Descending and with never-ceasing lapse
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects.

Applied to life and time, lapse has only this sense of gradual passing—the antithesis, almost, of a fall. As a verb, lapse seems never to have carried the meaning of trivial error. From the first it indicated a decline into heresy, sin, idolatry, and other states of perdition or decay. Black, however, writes, in his *Adventures with a Phaeton*, of a road lapsing back into moorland; and although you may lapse into error, you may also lapse into an armchair if Mr. Howell may be followed. We have but skimmed Mr. Bradley's excellent account of the word.

The seven columns and more devoted to "large" show in a very interesting way how this word has seen-sawed between the sense of quantity and the sense of size, and between abstractions and material things. The root meaning of large is bountiful, profuse, copious. From the twelfth century to the fifteenth the word was thus used. Caxton has: "And therefore more despendeth the nygard than the large"—i.e., than the generous man. Shakespeare gives us:

The poor King Reignier, whose large style
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse,

and a dramatist of the Restoration makes a character refuse a gift of money on these terms: "Indeed I won't! You have been large to me already." This sense is obsolete, as also is that of abundant in quantity in Camden: "She gave them large thanks"; or in Milton:

And we have yet large day, for scarce the sun
Hath finished half his journey.

We are rather surprised that no later quotation under this sense is forthcoming, especially from poetry. Sometimes Mr. Bradley queries the obsolescence of a sense, as in, for instance, the use of "latent" of material things. We speak of a latent disease, a latent schism, a latent peril. Do we speak of latent gold, meaning undiscovered gold? Gray has "the latent gem," and Dryden

The glitt'ring helm by moonlight will proclaim
The latent robber.

Would that the latent Boer were so advertised. The verb Latin, to turn into Latin, is marked obsolete, and no later quotation has been found than one from Cudworth (1678), "That of the Greek poet, Latin'd by Cicero." Yet this is a word that one thinks Lamb might have used. We are not disposed, on the other hand, to question the obsolescence of "latrocinate," to rob on the highway. The word may have existed only in the minds of lexicographers, from whom alone Mr. Bradley quotes it. Certainly we never read in history, tale, or story of a coach being latrocinated on Hounslow Heath. Robbery seems a bagatelle compared with latrocination. Yet Mr. Meredith has "latron" in *The Egoist*: "The hymeneal pair are licensed freebooters levying blackmail on us. . . . I apprehend that Mr. Whitford has a lower order of latrons in his mind." How well the word is introduced! To have written robbers, thieves, or freebooters was impossible. In "latron" the hymeneal pair and these could be allied without shock. If ever we decline from common honesty we should like to be known professionally as a latron; it sounds almost respectable: our occupation, latronage.

The earliest quotating of "leading article" is from a writer of 1807, who says: "The Morning Newspapers of the metropolis . . . in their solemn political paragraphs, and especially in those which are called their leading articles." The newness of the phrase is felt in this extract, but by 1812 "Your leading article of last Saturday" came glibly from the pen.

Mr. Bradley's biography of the word "leal" would have had some interest for Mr. Gladstone, whose application of the phrase the "land o' the leal" once aroused a hot controversy. As an adverb the word means, among other things, truly, exactly, thoroughly. We mention the fact for the sake of Mr. Bradley's remarkably robust quotation from a poem by the Scottish poet Morrison, a contemporary of Burns:

[She] swore she'd be
Kissed leal frae lug to lug
Fu' sweet that day.

The sense development of "lecture" is familiar, but very interesting. It was the act of reading, perusal; and Shelton could write of Don Quixote: "He plunged himself so deeply in his reading of these bookes, as he spent many times in the Lecture of them whole dayes and nights." As late as 1829 a memoir writer had: "No one . . . ought to be contented with a single lecture of a work that requires such extensive study." "And now abideth these three," said *Punch*, "natchah, cultchah, lectchah, but the greatest of these is lectchah." It is a pleasant irony that so many people like lectures because they hate lecture.

There is a notion abroad that a doctor was called a leech because he applied leeches. That is not so. The word has Old English and Old Frisian origins, and its root meaning is a physician or healer. It is now applied jocularly; but the word was once grave enough to be applied to the Deity, as by Chaucer, "God that is our lives' leche."

The Quiet Men.

The Cambridge Platonists. By E. T. Campagnac, M.A. (Clarendon Press. 6s. 6d. net.)

THIS is in the nature of a disinterment—a kindly disinterment. The sub-title of the volume will give but little further clue to any who are not close students of the theological literature of the seventeenth century. "Being selections from the writings of Benjamin Whichcote, John Smith, and Nathaniel Culverwel." Which, among all the John Smith's ever born and christened, was this, many will ask. Whichcote, though a Provost of King's, would strain most memories; and it would certainly puzzle a London matriculation candidate to place Culverwel. And why "Platonists"—the name which has stuck to this trio, the first as leader, the two others as developers, as well as to Cudworth and More, and certain others of less account? The name of Plato has been taken in vain by all manner of apologists for weaknesses, which range from theology to adultery, and with small excuse. But in the sense that every man who thinks at all is either an Aristotelian or a Platonist we may let the term pass, since these three clergymen certainly leaned rather towards the idealism of Plato than towards the formalism of Aristotle.

Was the disinterment, though gently accomplished, necessary, or even desirable? There are many obvious reasons for replying in the negative. None of the three preachers and lecturers on whom Mr. Campagnac has drawn published his own disjointed sermons and discourses; only one of them, Culverwel, could be suspected, from the materials he left behind, of any intention to publish. Though their influence was great on a small environment, "they enjoyed," as their present editor admits, "little vogue even in their own day." They made little stir in the world, or even in Cambridge, which was but a backwater of England when Cavaliers and Roundheads were at issue. Of Whichcote only among the three can more than a paragraph or two of biography be written; and of Smith and Culverwel little more can be said than that they went to Cambridge when Charles I. had nearly overdrawn his account on the nation's loyalty;

sat at the feet of Whichcote; preached, and died some years before the Restoration. In the matter of Smith we have the evidence of his funeral sermon, which was preached by Patrick, a Fellow of Queen's. Here is one passage:

Let me tell you, in conclusion of all, that herein would be shown our greatest love and affection which we bare to him, this would be the greatest honour of him, if we would but express his life in ours, that others might say when they behold us, there walks at least a shadow of Mr. Smith.

One wishes that a more sonorous name had been provided for so splendid a climax.

Is there, then, any justification for digging up these obscure Cambridge dons and adding to the enormous—and continuous—output of sermons? We think there is. For they represent a phase of thought in the middle of the seventeenth century, which exists in all other centuries, is too often overlooked, and always undervalued. In this world of struggle there are always, besides the men who fight and fuss, men who watch, contemplate, and see both sides. The Ciceronian frame of mind, which sees objections in both extremes, is not the one to found empires or behead despots. In religion the suave tolerance of an Erasmus will not effect a Reformation or organise an Inquisition. The world of action seems to demand exaggeration rather than truth, and violence rather than reason. But when the noise of strife is over it is usually found that the minority who sought for "sweet reasonableness" had won the fight long before, with minds serene and skulls uncracked. Now these three clergymen were born into an age when matters of theological doctrine were being discussed with cold steel and bullets, if oppression and persecution failed. In their quiet retreats they saw—though watching the fight with eager interest—that the fight was for a foolish object, and fought under wrong rules. "There is nothing more unnatural to religion than contentions about it," Whichcote jots down among his "aphorisms." Contentions were all around him as he wrote. On the one side was Laud, with his ecclesiastical statesmanship; on the other was the iron-clamped theological system of the Puritans. To these quiet men who reasoned both parties seemed to be exaggerating. They saw that conduct was of more importance than Laud's scheme of Church polity, and that the human reason must revolt against the arbitrary restrictions of Puritanism. "It is the chiefest of Good Things for a Man to be *Himself*." Does not that aphorism of Whichcote's touch the middle-point of the pendulum as it swings between Hedonism and Asceticism? And, furthermore, we find in the minds of these quiet Cambridge men that consciousness which has lain within all quiet men, a consciousness which One who "did not strive or cry" expressed by the phrase, "The Kingdom of God is within you." Whichcote, of course, was attacked by the "literal inspiration" men of the day. But he nursed the knowledge of which no noise of strife can deprive the quiet man, that Revelation is no matter of manuscript or print; else every man, to be good, must be a textual critic. For how shall he determine otherwise if Buddha, or Christ, or Mahomet, or Swedenborg, or Brigham Young, or Mrs. Baker Eddy, or any one of a hundred "revelations," gives the rule of life? "The Kingdom of God is within you." Of this Whichcote's expansion is: "If you only say you have a *Revelation* from God; I must have a *Revelation* from God, too, before I can believe you, as *St. Peter* and *Cornelius*." So the disinterment, we think, is justified. The seventeenth century rings with politics and dogmas and blows. It is well to be reminded that in the linked brotherhood of quiet men were those Cambridge scholars who, in the midst of tumult, knew that to every man comes his revelation if he will only sit still for a space and listen.

An Epic of 'Appiness.

The Apostles of the South-East. By F. T. Bullen.
(Hodder & Stoughton. 6s.)

To review this book by Mr. Bullen is a difficult and a rather heartless task. Tracts are not in the ordinary way reviewed at all; they are written and printed, and passers-by "take one," profiting thereby, or otherwise. But here is a tract for which six shillings must be paid (less discount), a tract that runs to 331 pages, and is bound in cloth, and has on its cover the name of an author whose previous work has had good writing in it. Hence it falls naturally into the reviewer's hands, just as *The Cruise of the Cachalot* did, and *Idylls of the Sea*. But what to say!

Our present embarrassment is the more acute because Mr. Bullen is so clearly a sincere man. One must grant him his point of view. One must agree that these "Apostles of the South-East," with their sermons, their prayers, their handshakings, their "God bless you's," really were heart-whole pietists, doing what they believed to be their duty in the service of their Master, whom Mr. Bullen calls "the greatest, bravest, happiest Man that ever lived." Their state of beatitude may seem to have too much of self-satisfaction in it, to be a thought too near the content proceeding from a good Sunday dinner, but we cannot criticise. As we have said, their sincerity must be taken as fact.

But leaving on one side the question of their piety, and coming to Mr. Bullen's Christian standards and to the literary merits of the book, we can speak freely. It is not a good book. It is a sticky, unctuous thing. Real Christians, as Mr. Bullen asks us to believe his apostles to be, in contradistinction to the spurious ideals set up by the popular novelists, do not want such fervid championship. A real Christian makes his own way. He needs none of Mr. Bullen's perspiring advocacy. And the worst of it is, Mr. Bullen does not convince us of his heroes' superlative worth at all. He shows them praying, and preaching, and grasping each other's hands, and going home afterwards in an ecstasy of rectitude. But he does not show them in the home. That is where the real tests are found. To riot in an orgasm of oratorical benevolence is one thing; to be a Christian in the house and shop is another. We are not convinced that these apostles were doing much more than taking their drunkenness in another form. That the form was well we do not deny; the point to be made is, that when Mr. Bullen arrogantly and complacently denies real Christianity to Miss Correlli's and Mr. Caine's puppets, he ought to have something better of his own to show.

The central character, the Master Christian, of the book, is Saul, the boatswain. Mr. Bullen shows us Saul at work converting a whole ship's crew. But how does he set about it? Not by adhering to Christ's rule as to "turning the other cheek," but by bashing every recalcitrant man until they became meek and tractable. His pet trick is to lift them bodily and throw them against the bulwarks or on the deck. Mr. Bullen wishes us to believe that it was Saul's religion that won the day; but he has not proved it. All that we are convinced of is that the fore-castle in time realised that Saul was stronger than they, and the sooner they complied the happier would general conditions be. A clean-minded agnostic, with equally powerful muscles, could have done as much. Saul was undoubtedly a fine fellow; but his Christianity was the first thing he abandoned when really in a hole. Personally, we consider him right; but Mr. Bullen's defence of this really real Christian's tendency to fisticuffs should be interesting reading.

We hope that Mr. Bullen will abandon this kind of book. It is bad for him, and bad for his admirers. No

one who knows the sea as he does, and can write as well, should waste his time in unconvincing narratives of life in London, with page after page of dreary sermon and smug supplication, reported at full length in a phonetic language of horrible ugliness. To come upon "Ho Gord" and "kermarnment" in print gives a positive physical pain. All the essential part of this book, to make a respectable, serviceable tract, could have been packed into a tenth of its size, and sold at a reasonable price, say, a penny. The rest is Hallelujah padding, and not too good at that.

Sicily in Big.

In Sicily, 1896-1898-1900. By Douglas Sladen. 2 vols.
(Sands. 63s. net.)

It has been known for many months through the usual channels, whereof our own announcement page is one, that Mr. Douglas Sladen was writing a big book about Sicily. The big book has come, and our office scales return its weight at just under 12 lbs. avoirdupois. This seems a trifle unfortunate, because Mr. Sladen tells us that you can send a parcel of books weighing 11 lbs. to Sicily for half-a-crown; his own would cost more, and there would still remain the very large number of rather bulky volumes which he advises the serious tourist to send in advance to Messina. Surrounded by Mr. Sladen's dozen or so "best books" about Sicily, and spreading before him the glistening pages of his own work, the serious tourist is likely to become very serious indeed. Yet Mr. Sladen himself is gay from cover to cover. Indeed, this work presents a singular contrast between its outward size and weight and the lightness of its narrative detail. You turn wide and heavy pages which flash your lamp-light back, as the Bay of Taormina flashes the sunlight, to find your eye resting on a section devoted to the humours of sending a telegram, a description of a hotel dining-room, or a bit of tourists' dialogue worked up into a facetious fritter. Usually a book which compels twice-washen hands and a drawing-room handling of its pages is written in a circumspect style, but Mr. Sladen, unabashed by his format, prattles always at his ease. "I shall not keep the reader long at Catania; I do not like Catania, although I recognise that it has its points. Miss Heriot, who was new to Sicily, was fascinated with the way in which all the streets seem to end in Etna, and with sundry pottery shops and public gardens. But then, of course, she was new to Sicily, and if she and Mr. Witheridge had been fumbling on their marriage tour instead of protected by us, I have no doubt they would have stayed at the hotel at Catania—the hotel, which gives itself airs and charges London prices, and is altogether what a Sicilian hotel should not be. Of course Etna is very much in evidence at Catania." Very much "in evidence," too, is Mr. Sladen's London journalistic style—pleasant enough in its way, if you do find yourself murmuring Milton's appeal, "Return, Alpheus. . . . return, Sicilian Muse."

Style apart, these vast and beautifully illustrated pages are not bad reading. They have the grace of enthusiasm. Mr. Sladen enjoyed Sicily, and makes you think again and again how you may visit this isle of flowers, temples, myths, and idle peasants who pose. "Getting paid for being photographed in a laurel wreath on account of his good looks is the Taorminian's ideal form of work." With its Greek theatre, its marvellous bay, and its view of Etna, Taormina is one of the loveliest places in the world. Mr. Sladen thinks it is an artist's place rather than author's, because its sights are so concentrated; a place to write in, not to write about. Of such light sentimentousness these pages are full. At Taormina, at Palermo, at Syracuse, at Girgenti, we have the same mixture of fact and comment, information and badinage. The moods, occupations, enthu-

siasms, of several long holidays are written out to the accompaniment of excellent photographs. We could wish that Mr. Sladen were sometimes less expansive. Too characteristic is the touch: "Mr. Freeman, who was a fellow of my college—Trinity, Oxford—says . . ." From Freeman and from Newman Mr. Sladen quotes much and wisely, but his way of linking himself to the persons of these great writers is a little too ingenious. Here is an instance: "One is struck, in reading about Newman's tour in Sicily, by the extraordinary resolution and fortitude which he displayed. I never met him, it is true, until he was an old man who had lived for many years in the strictest religious discipline, but it would have meant a good deal to a much more vigorous man to have gone over Sicily as he did and when he did." The superfluity of the reminiscence is not diminished by the fact that Newman's visit to Sicily took place a quarter of a century before Mr. Sladen's birth.

Mr. Sladen remarks that "there is something magnetic, or perhaps I should say hypnotic, in Sicilian scenery." We had rather he had used neither word. But Sicilian scenery and Sicilian street-scenes and the august relics that make Sicily lovely and venerable are presented here in photographs of great beauty. The portfolios of Alinari of Florence, Sommer of Naples, Prof. Solinas of Palermo, and other masters of the camera have been ransacked to provide illustrations for these splendidly-produced volumes.

Co'our and Freemasonry.

The Sherbro and Its Hinterland. By T. J. Aldridge. (Macmillan. 15s. net.)

We have nothing but praise for this book, which is an example of what all books dealing with such unknown parts of the Empire should be. Mr. T. J. Aldridge is District Commissioner of Sherbro, West Coast of Africa, and he writes with a full and intimate knowledge of his subject. It may be as well to mention that the Sherbro is part of the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone, and is a great revenue-producing country of vital importance, although it is practically unknown outside the official circle and the West African section of the mercantile world. Mr. Aldridge's book is a complete description of the Colony. He deals with its factories, waterways, transport difficulties, overland travelling, indigenous products, cultivated crops, and so on; describes a long journey through the hinterland, and recounts the acts of Sir Francis Fleming and of Sir F. Cardew, and the Mendi rising of 1898. But the most fascinating chapters are those which treat of the secret societies of the natives—the Poro, the Bundu, the Yassi, and the Human Leopards. The account of them reads like the weird imaginings of some strange intellect, but the story is told in simple and matter-of-fact style, without any attempt at fine writing or word-painting—a style which makes the recital the more impressive. Before the establishment of British law in the protectorate, secret societies entirely ruled the natives. These societies are still of great importance, and are an enormous force both for good and evil. The Poro is a system of Freemasonry amongst the men. The training for the privilege of joining this society may begin for the boys at any age from seven to twenty, but it only lasts a few months.

Dancing is an important part of their education. The dancing dress of the Poro boy is very peculiar. A hoop encircles the waist, from which depends a cascade of fibre reaching to the ankles; a webbing of country cotton is over the body; a curious head-dress, not unlike the front of a mitre, and of fantastic device, is usually worn, and Sebehs, or fetish charms, hang from the neck. Dancing is accompanied by the beating of the Sangboi, or tom-tom, dancing and singing to this instrument being the principal amusement of the Mendis after dark. When the boys have completed their training, and gone through the

ceremonies in the juvenile Poro, they are eligible to join the general, or social, Poro, in which is formulated the unwritten law of the country.

Mr. Aldridge says that he is satisfied that no one outside the societies really knows what the secrets are. However, he describes a great many of their strange customs, which vary with the different degrees of the order. Of the initiation he says:

No one is allowed inside the highest degree in the Poro bush except by the invitation of the chiefs. A person brought up before a Poro tribunal might be tried, killed, and buried inside the Poro bush without the slightest chance of the circumstance being divulged outside. . . . The Poro bush usually remains open for three or four months, and the ceremony during that period is repeated as often as sufficient members are elected. The Poro devil, when approaching a town, does not wear a distinctive costume; he is merely accompanied by a large concourse of Poro men and boys, who run about and make a great noise. Upon this alarm reaching the town, all men who are not of the Poro order, together with all women and children, must conceal themselves inside their huts, and drop down the mats before the door and window spaces. The women are to kneel down indoors and clap their hands. The devil then enters the town, when all noise must cease. Upon these occasions his presence is usually for the purpose of fetching an initiate. The devil speaks in a discordant way through a piece of hollow stick, having holes cut in it like a flute, which holes are covered over with spiders' webs. He compliments the chief, and inquires what news there is in the town, and after a few minutes he goes away. The only occasion on which the devil makes a prolonged stay in a town is on the evening before the boys are brought out from the Poro bush affiliated to it, when he remains from about seven o'clock in the evening until two or three o'clock in the morning. At intervals during this time he perambulates the town, blowing his reed flute in a very doleful way—the meaning of it being that he is presumed to be in the pains before child-birth; for, when the boys go first into the Poro bush, the devil is supposed to be pregnant, and, as the boys remain there the whole of the rains, when they come out of it the devil is said to have given birth.

The Bundu is a society that affects only the women, and it is worked with even greater secrecy than the Poro. The Bundu bush, where the young girls are trained, is always selected in a very secluded spot, and there is nothing to give any indication of its whereabouts. It is enshrouded in mystery. The Yassi Society belongs both to the Sherbro and Mendi countries. Apparently in a measure it works conjointly with the Bundu Society; but while it is professedly a society for women, it does not object to the admission of men of the social Poro order at some of its meetings. The Human Leopard Society was simply a murder society, and arose thus:

Before the native rising in 1898, when an attempt was made to put an end to British and all other civilising influences, a part of the Sherbro, known as the Imperri country, had long been notorious for possessing a medicine peculiar to the place, called Borfimor (a contraction of Boreh fima, medicine bag). This Borfimor was a solid preparation, apparently harmless in itself until anointed with human fat, when it became an all-powerful fetish. Of course, to obtain human fat people must be killed, and to procure victims the notorious Human Leopard Society was formed. . . . I remember to have been told, some twenty years ago, that it was then merely a family arrangement, the members working only among their own relatives; and that at the committee meetings of the society a relative of some member was selected, told off to be the next victim, and subsequently waylaid and killed by a man in the guise of a leopard, who, rushing upon the unsuspecting victim from behind, and planting a three-pronged knife of special make into the neck, separated the vertebra, generally causing instantaneous death. The body was then opened, and some of the internal part removed for the purpose of obtaining the fat, which was considered necessary to preserve the magical powers of the

Boriform. . . . The society after a time becoming too extensive to remain a mere family concern, it appears to have been changed into a public institution; that is, any victim could be taken from the general community, and we know as a fact that the lives of many innocent persons were sacrificed in this manner.

Happily the Government took such strong measures that the society is believed to be now merely a matter of history. The photographs, with which the book is lavishly illustrated, are excellent, and greatly aid the reader, while a most useful map gives an insight into a strange land which is absolutely unknown to the great majority of Englishmen. Mr. Aldridge has written a work of the highest value, which it is safe to say will be a text-book on the subject for many a year to come.

Other New Books.

Comments of a Countess. (Duckworth. 6s.)

THESE sketchy sketches are republished from the *Outlook*. Their proper home was surely the *Sketch*. Their very name bewrayeth them. They are the kind of (alleged) smart chatter which is written by (alleged) smart people about (alleged) smart society. They are also, on the surface, satirical. There is no end to what they are on the surface. But it is paint, and comes off as you handle them. They are not really smart, they are not about any people that have existed in any possible society: reality is not in them. They are not even really amusing—as unreal things can sometimes be made. The style belongs to a class which flourishes exceedingly, and is *impayable*. It professes to be witty (we call it “smart” nowadays), airy, piquant, off-hand—*deja-gé*, our grandfathers would have said. At first sight it *looks* all these things. But when you sample it there is only a second-rate, mechanical substitute for “smartness,” a colourable imitation of *esprit*, the recipe for which you can procure at any publisher’s. You think you have champagne; you find it ginger-pop. Or (to use a witty lady’s emendation) the pop is in champagne-bottles. The mechanism of bright writing is here: strings of incongruities rapidly delivered (“an historical seat with ghosts; electric lights, and a band to play during dinner”); flippant epigram (the lady mislays “the Collect for the first Sunday after Ascot”); little “hits” delivered with the pert little air which is considered feminine and fashionable (“I can imagine what [the wives] are like by the way their husbands tie their ties”). But the substance is thin, obvious, its commonplace the more commonplace for the manner in which it is jingled off. The satire is conventional and hurts nobody, for it is aimed at puppets. The host, who is a cipher in his own house; the ladies, who quarrel and exhibit their vanities over private theatricals, or talk baseless scandal about other ladies whom they do not know; these are specimens gathered from the opening pages. And of such is the book: false satire with false “smartness.”

Mirth and Music. By F. B. Doveton. (Baker & Son. 2s. 6d. net.)

MR. DOVETON’S verses are republished from a very wide range of papers and periodicals; nor can we be surprised that they should have found such acceptance. They are not, indeed, animated by any large portion of the divine frenzy; but they are simple, tuneful, with a healthy love for all natural beauty, and a pleasant fancy. “Goldielocks” shows his average style:

Who is Goldielocks, I wonder?
Let her charms be sung!
She was surely made to plunder
Hearts of old and young;

Know, ye Maggies, Mauds, and Maries,
She was cradled by the fairies.
Where the winter cometh never
And the glades are green for ever:
Mid the birds and blossoms there
Goldielocks grew fair.

It is too long to quote entire. But we like best Mr. Doveton’s lighter vein, such as “In Many a Land,” from the pages of Mr. *Punch*:

The bonny babe, tossed blithely to and fro,
Rests on Amanda’s apron white as snow
In Lapland.

Full well he fares, no epicure is he,
Upon a diet that would frighten me.
In Papland.

Anon he is an urchin, and must learn
The globes and g’ography, and take his turn
In Mapland.

If he is idle, and his books will flout,
There is the ruler, and he’ll have a bout
In Rapland.

Or, it may be, his fate is harder yet,
And he will spend a time he won’t forget
In Strapland.

Well, like the longest lane, the laggard day
Will end at last, and Tom will snore away
In Napland!

Mr. Doveton has read his Calverley, of course; but he shows rather a pretty faculty for the metrical trifle.

“Prosperous” British India: A Revelation from Official Records. By W. Digby, C.I.E. (Unwin. 12s. 6d.)

AN ironical title, a startling cover, a comprehensive dedication, a facsimile letter, and nearly 650 pages of badly arranged materials constitute this volume; for, in the true literary sense, it is not worthy to be called a book. No one need question the author’s earnestness in his attack on the Government of India, but after his preliminary remark that the writer is nought we are entitled to resent, the perpetual intrusion of the personal note. Mr. Digby assures us that “the writing of this book has been the hate-fullest and most painful duty I have ever performed.” Might he not have alleviated his self-inflicted sufferings by trying to do a little more justice to the work of his fellow-countrymen in India? As a sample of Mr. Digby’s method, we may take his statement, which is unsupported by a shadow of real evidence, that the average income in India was 22s. 4d. per head, apparently in 1900. With this he compares the average taxation of 3s. 3d. per head, of course omitting to say that this figure includes land revenue, which is not taxation, but rent paid to the Government instead of to a private landlord. Again, we find Mr. Digby saying: “1800 to 1825, four famines; 1875 to 1900, twenty-two famines. To me it appears that the twenty-two, as contrasted with the four, are the product of our system of rule.” If anyone will examine Mr. Digby’s twenty-two famines he will see how grossly misleading this assertion is. Moreover, was each famine preceded by a drought, and, if so, was the Government responsible for such drought? And how would the natives have fared without Government aid? Yet again, Mr. Digby affirms that in the last thirty years “the drain” of produce has averaged £30,000,000 a year. What “official records” reveal this alleged fact? The assertion that there is no direct economic equivalent for the mis-called “tribute” is equally grotesque. What of the railways and irrigation works, which leave a balance after the payment of interest, which have saved millions of lives during famine, and which have added enormously to the wealth and comfort of the people? What of the services rendered by our Army in maintaining absolute peace over almost all India during half a century? What of the able civil administration,

which foreigners admire, but which green-eyed Little Englanders can only carp at? All these things are "economic"—that is, appertain to wealth—and it is for these things that India pays by her excess of exports. Let Mr. Digby and his friends say candidly whether they consider that India ought to repudiate her loans raised in England, and expel the British soldiers and civilians who defend and govern her. We have no patience for more. That the Government of India is far from perfect one may easily admit, but a Government struggling amid unequalled difficulties at least deserves fair and honest criticism. Whoever cares to track Mr. Digby's fallacies through this very dear volume will find admirable guidance in the index, which is the only coherent and scientific section in this mass of printed matter.

In a Minster Garden. By The Dean of Ely. (Elliot Stock. 6s.)

THE motto *O et Olla* upon Dr. Stubbs's title-page is taken from the thirteenth and fourteenth century Convent accounts of Ely. The author says:—

It is apparently the term under which certain items of expenditure connected with the annual audit of accounts were entered. Such audit was preceded by a special service or devotion in the church, and concluded by a banquet in the refectory. My readers will not think me too fanciful, I hope, if I take the old monastic ledger-book phrase as a title motto to characterise the items of a book which is, in fact, a medley of facts and fancies about the great Minster which I love so well—a *causerie* of the old time and the new. . . .

From this it may be gathered that the book is of the inconsequential kind. It touches upon many subjects, dealing with each in a manner which is nearly always interesting and often informed with a certain kindly wisdom. Dr. Stubbs writes appreciatively to a correspondent in New York of the venerable beauty and associations of his Cathedral, of the Deanery Library, of the celebrated chantry of Prior John of Crauden and of the happy conservatism of his surroundings. Then there are dialogues, on various subjects between a Girton girl, a couple of young men, and the Dean,—dialogues artless enough, but having a good deal of common sense and suggestion. The prose sections are interspersed with verse of unequal value. We are glad to be reminded of the noble death-cry of Earl Bryhtnoth, "God, I thank Thee for all the joy I have had in life," though the Dean's lines by no means do justice to his text; on the other hand, "A Mattinsong for Christmas" has considerable beauty both of sentiment and expression. On the whole *In a Minster Garden* is a pleasant and engaging book. It is of a class which we think has been overdone; these *causeries* upon all manner of subjects between the covers of one volume have rather an enervating tendency. But Dr. Stubbs has done much better than many writers who have attempted similar tasks.

Ballads of the Fleet, and Other Poems. By Rennell Rodd. (Arnold. 3s. 6d.)

THIS volume, Mr. Rennell Rodd tells us, is chiefly a reprint from *Ballads of the Fleet* (the first edition) and *The Violet Crown*. But *The Story of Sir Francis Drake* has been completed by some additional pieces, while *Abou Hamed*, though it has appeared in the *Spectator*, is new in book-form. Mr. Rodd's reputation is of long standing, and his capacity in the ballad style is well known. *The Story of Sir Francis Drake* is nothing less than a great ballad-cycle, revolving round the exploits of that national hero. If sometimes one feels too much reminded of Mr.

Kipling, Mr. Rennell Rodd has yet a very pictorial style of his own. A more sustained energy is its chief desideratum, but that is by no means a constant lack. Here is a favourable specimen of it:

He laid his course by the Spaniard's chart, "For we'll trust to the open sea,
And it's Westward Ho till the home-wind blows, as it was from the start," said he.

"We are half-way round the world, my lads, and it's half-way round once more,
Till we've ploughed a track on the ocean's back that never was ploughed before."

* * * *

And the mariner's boy on the long night-watch would brood on his heart's desire,
While the strange stars played with the dancing yards, and the wake ran blue with fire.

This is vigorous and picturesque, if not strongly original, and the book will doubtless appeal greatly to the Imperialistic fervour of the day.

Fiction.

Joe Wilson and His Mates. By Henry Lawson. (Blackwood. 6s.)

MR. LAWSON grows in stature. Not that everything in this book is better than the best of *While the Billy Boils*—indeed, there is nothing here to compare with the Sydney larrikin sketches there, and "The Drover's Wife" lacks a counterpart—but the cumulative effect is more satisfying, the flavour more mellow, and the philosophy more humorously kindly and mature. Mitchell was a notable figure, but Joe Wilson comes nigher the heart; and if story-tellers of the school of Mr. Lawson, who is closely related to Mr. Bret Harte, do not touch our hearts or our risibilities they are naught. Mr. Lawson is a sentimentalist of the true blood, with all the leanings of his kind to picturesque scamps and humorous scoundrels, to swindlers who prey upon tyrants, to the unlucky and the distressed and the weak-minded. He combines genuine, if inarticulate, Christianity, with that interest in human nature without which no novelist can hope to hold us.

This is a book in which many of the commandments are luridly broken, fists are busy, and profanity resounds, and the inferior and infuriating whisky of the Bush is perceptible on every page; and yet it is informed by a rare sweetness. Only a great writer could have done what Mr. Lawson has done with this material.

Mr. Lawson has divided his volume into two parts. The first tells the story of Joe Wilson's engagement and married life, breaking abruptly before the end, with the promise of more to follow. The opening story, "Joe Wilson's Courtship," in its way comes nigh perfection. It is the oldest of stories made to live afresh: as genuine an idyll as any in Theocritus, although the squalid conditions of the Bush are about it, with a brutal fight in the midst, which, however, instead of marring the glamour of the thing, only adds thereto. Then we have Wilson's later years with the illusions dropping away, squalid again, but done with exquisite tenderness.

The second part of the book is a collection of yarns of the Bush, chiefly humorous or pathetic. The gem of this section is the brief saga (as it might be called) of the Flour of Wheat, a wild Irishman settled in New Zealand. We quote one episode from his highly-coloured career:

The Flour of Wheat carried his mate, Dinny Murphy, all the way in from Th' Canary to the hospital on his back. Dinny was very bad—the man was dying of the

dysentery or something. The Flour laid down on a spare bunk in the reception-room, and hailed the staff.

"Inside there—come out!"

The doctor and some of the hospital people came to see what was the matter. The doctor was a heavy swell, with a big cigar, held up in front of him between two fat, soft, yellow-white fingers, and a dandy little pair of gold-rimmed eye-glasses nipped into his nose with a spring.

"There's me lovely mate lying there dying of the dysentery," says the Flour, "and you've got to fix him up and bring him round."

Then he shook his fist in the doctor's face and said—"If you let that lovely man die—look out!"

The doctor was startled. He backed off at first; then he took a puff at his cigar, stepped forward, had a careless look at Dinny, and gave some order to the attendants. The Flour went to the door, turned half round as he went out, and shook his fist at them again, and said—

"If you let that lovely man die—mind!"

In about twenty minutes he came back, wheeling a case of whisky in a barrow. He carried the case inside, and dumped it down on the floor.

"There," he said, "pour that into the lovely man."

Then he shook his fist at such members of the staff as were visible, and said—

"If you let that lovely man die—look out!"

They were used to hard-cases, and didn't take much notice of him, but he had the hospital in an awful mess; he was there all hours of the day and night; he would go down town, have a few drinks and a fight maybe, and then he'd say, "Ah, well, I'll have to go up and see how me lovely mate's getting on."

And every time he'd go up he'd shake his fist at the hospital in general and threaten to murder 'em all if they let Dinny Murphy die.

Well, Dinny Murphy died one night. The next morning the Flour met the doctor in the street, and hauled off and hit him between the eyes, and knocked him down before he had time to see who it was.

"Stay there, ye little whipper-snapper," said the Flour of Wheat; "you let that lovely man die!"

The police happened to be out of town that day, and while they were waiting for them the Flour got a coffin and carried it up to the hospital, and stood it on end by the doorway.

"I've come for me lovely mate!" he said to the scared staff.

Another excellent yarn is "A Hero in Dingo Scrubs," which, if the old art of mixed public reading were ever recaptured, should bring down the house every time. Altogether Mr. Lawson has given us excellent entertainment, and the real thing to boot.

Dumb. By The Hon. Mrs. Walter R. D. Forbes. (Chatto and Windus. 6s.)

It is astonishing how some kinds of excellence can pall. There is nothing particular to be said against the Hon. Mrs. Forbes's book; the plot is irreproachable, the characters are irreproachable, the grammar is irreproachable. It is all as correct as possible; yet we long for a touch of distinction of any kind, in the story or the people or the style—almost for a blemish, in fact, so long as it be an intelligent blemish. But the same dead level is maintained from first to last; and it is a dead level of unutterable dullness. Throughout upwards of fifty chapters, nobody arouses in us anything but the most ladylike emotion. With a conscientiousness worthy of a better cause, each puppet on the author's stage plays its part in a typical manner. The hero, Sir Alistair Craig, is a Scotchman, and is therefore described as "dour"; the heroine, Aileen, is Irish, and shows her feelings as only the Irish Celt of fiction could, though we do not know on what authority this inaccurate observation is often set down as fact. The

hero's friend, Lord Cheston, has all the brave, manly qualities required by such a part, including that of self-effacement when necessary; and the villain, who, strange to say, is a gallant Captain, bites his moustache savagely—a feat we have often longed, though in vain, to witness in real life. There is also a dear old Scotch lady, who calls Lord Cheston "laddie," the first time she meets him, as any dear old Scotch lady, of course, would. Other lords and ladies flit through the pages—after doing the same through these particular pages, we cannot help an occasional *cliché*—and they all make the kind of smart, though carefully phrased, conversation that smart people in novels do make. Aileen makes it too, so we are not surprised when Alistair, after driving everybody to exasperation by his dumbness (except the reader), finally commits suicide. Then the other people go on talking; and at last there is an epilogue.

The Real World. By Robert Herrick. (Macmillan. 6s.)

The pervading spirit of this conscientiously and sometimes charmingly written American novel is made plain by the preliminary quotation from Sir Thomas Browne: "The severe Schools shall never laugh me out of the Philosophy of Hermes, that this visible World is but a picture of the invisible, wherein, as in a Pourtraiet, things are not truly, but in equivocal shapes, and as they counterfeit some more real substance in that invisible fabrick." Mr. Herrick's hero, Jack Pemberton, is overburdened with his soul. He is the "queer" boy, unhappy at home, scorned by his mother, but comprehended by his father, between whom and himself there are "affinities." Jack is forced by circumstances to make his own way in the world. And he makes it, deviously enough. But he is always a visionary, and going through experiences of this kind:

He jumped from his hot bed, and put his head out of the tiny window. The night air was heavy with salty fog, and the hills across the bay were dark as if a thick curtain had been let down at the end of an act. The face of the girl who had looked into his eyes came out of the mist and stayed with him.

The fault of the book is that it is too fanciful, and not sufficiently imaginative. Only a very real force could carry the burden of "soul" which broods over the narrative, and Mr. Herrick is lacking in force. Consequently, he often sinks into prettiness. And, do what he will, he cannot get free of the shackles of convention. He cannot, for instance, dispense with the inevitable small girl ("Jack could see her walking up the gravelled path, a dainty aristocrat") at the beginning, who "comes on" at the end in the old, old rôle. That girl, whether her name be Elsie or Enid or Guenevere, is mere "mush"; she has no business in any self-respecting novel. Again, he cannot dispense with the inevitable operatic performance of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," with the inevitable quotation (in the original German), and the inevitable description of the love-duet ("the soft, passionate, insistent duet began with its recurrent melody, its leaping, quivering, maddening, ecstasy—the music of the body, the poignant cry of the nerves") which in the nature of things never can be described. Where d'Annunzio has failed, shall minor novelists succeed? Yet they try, and persist in trying.

Despite these and similar weaknesses and errors of tact, praise is due to *The Real World*. Much of it shows faithful observation. The very slight sketch of Jack's ineffective sister, Mary, is admirably true. Her severe rejoinder to him, on p. 38, "But you trouble mother so!" is one of those startlingly life-like things that occur so often in Tolstoy's novels.

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Maxime Görki.

RUSSIA, and by Russia we mean the basic "folk," and not the gimcrack, French-polished superstructure of bureaucracy which has imposed itself upon the folk, is typified for us in the figure at the close of *On the Eve*—"Uvar Ivanovitch flourished his fingers, and fixed his enigmatical stare in the far distance." Vast and inarticulate, it waits, with the tireless patience of a great beast,—waits for it knows not what. Organically, nationally, it has not yet spoken. Among the arts it seems to play ignorantly, like a child, enjoying good and bad with equal zest. It accepts a charlatan like Verestchagin and a profound genius like Tchaikowsky in the same spirit; and probably at the present moment it really prefers *The Second Thoughts of an Idle Fellow to Resurrection*. This infantine capriciousness, this submissive attendance upon fate, make it all the more remarkable that Russia should have raised up during the past century an unbroken dynasty of great novelists, who have known and spoken their own minds, triumphed over surpassing difficulties by means of a definite and reasoned activity, and—it is not too much to say—dominated the imaginative prose literature of Europe. In poetry, music, and painting Russia shines with fitful and uncertain magnificence, but for nearly a hundred years the light of her fiction has never been dimmed. Gogol, Dostoievsky, Turgenev, and Tolstoi—these four gigantic names stretch across a whole century; these four names shine like beacons in a dark land. It is as though the western peoples turned their eyes eastwards and saw in the night just those four luminaries burning. Is it not true that the western lights somehow pale before their radiance? When we think of *Dead Souls*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Virgin Soil*, and *Anna Karenina*, what other novels do we think of? Not *Esmond*, nor *The Pickwick Papers*, nor *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, nor *Madame Bovary*, nor *Jane Eyre*, nor *Richard Feverel*, nor *La Terre*; no, nor even *Eugénie Grandet*. To mention such beside them is, as it were, to discuss municipal after national politics. These novels have a kind of mysterious grandeur apart from their excellence, and perhaps the only western works that may compare with them are *Père Goriot* and *Notre Dame*. We can show feats of art more perfectly accomplished and more poignant, but we can show nothing so large and masterful, so universally tyrannic over the emotions. We have never conquered Europe, with all our advantages. That has been left to Russia, the barbaric, shackled, and taciturn. The mere emergence of her great writers is one of the miracles of literature, as can immediately be realised by a mind that dwells for a minute on the details. Consider, for example, Dostoievsky, leaving the hotbed of militarism in which he had been educated, in order to adopt fiction as a profession. Even in England, where the entire nation will conspire to advertise and coddle an audacious beginner, that fateful act of deliberately "commencing author" is regarded as notable. In Russia they don't precisely assist the neophyte. They hold him guilty, and he must prove his innocence at short intervals. A loose paragraph, and you are in the

fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, with leisure to appreciate the very fine name of your prison. Most Russian authors seem to go to prison. To write, there, is like crossing Niagara on a tight-rope maliciously shaken. And even when you have succeeded a little, say in Moscow, what a distance to Paris and London! Everyone knows French and English, but who knows Russian? You must overstep the terrific boundary of your language, persuade some rare scholar to believe in you, trust to his skill and enthusiasm, and then, at the last, rely on your original force to break the icy indifference of a foreign race absorbed in its own affairs. And here, perhaps, lies the secret of the supremacy of those four solitary names. A bureaucracy which mediævally discourages thinking and reading, and a language of extraordinary difficulty—these factors tend towards the survival of only the fittest among authors.

It was about time that a new Russian novelist should loom over Europe. Tolstoi the prodigious approaches the mighty end of his term, and those far lesser, but nevertheless distinguished, figures, Korolenko and Potapenko, have failed to continue the tradition of greatness. Well, the possible man appears in Alexei Maximovitch Peshkoff, self-styled Görki. We say the possible man simply because experience teaches us that Russia's novelists are to be taken seriously, and not as the comets of other countries; and not because we have yet any positive evidence that Görki belongs to the tribe of Gogol. The presumption so far is rather against his authenticity. He has, however, forced his fame beyond the Russian border. He is read in Berlin, Paris, London, and New York. His serials run in Paris, he has suddenly flamed in the most serious of our own reviews, and two books, *The Orloff Couple* and *Malva* (Heinemann) and *Foma Gordyéeff* (Unwin), have been issued here simultaneously. Further, the antics of the Russian police and the wild enthusiasm of Russian students have combined to get his name into the newspapers. One remembers his sour protest against the audience that applauded his entrance into the box of a theatre: "Why can't you leave me alone?" That angry speech, from a young man aged thirty-two, who ten years ago was working as a stevedore, augurs some originality of mind. It also, we fear, augurs some affectation on the part of the speaker. We confess that his pseudonym, Maxime Görki (Maximus Bitter), seems to us ominously crude; it denotes a conscious pose, and art is not often, though it certainly is sometimes, produced by the poseur.

Görki was born at Nijni Novgorod. His father was a jobbing upholsterer, his mother the daughter of a dyer. At nine, an orphan, he was a shoemaker's errand boy, and for the next twelve or thirteen years he was everything by turns and nothing long—galley-boy on a Volga steamer, baker, salt-miner, wood-chopper, porter, railway signalman, kwass-seller, lawyer's clerk, tramp, and outcast. He was of the people and he clung to the people, and his acquaintance and sympathy with the submerged half of Russia could not, we suppose, easily be surpassed. His first important story, *Tchelkache*, appeared in 1893, and a translation of a French translation of it may be seen in the December *Fortnightly*. It has been called marvellous; marvellous it decidedly is not, save in a relative sense. But it is remarkable, this episode of longshore thievery; the atmosphere of a busy port, the effect of night on the water in a small boat, the hopelessness of arduous toil, the futile vapidness of a squalid carouse—these things are set down with a lyrical fervour whose vagueness is redeemed by rhapsodic strength; and the last scene, by the sea, with the magnanimous response of the thief to his accomplice's hysterical appeal, strikes us as finely original and convincing, as Russian, half-Oriental, to the very core.

Foma Gordyéeff, the only long novel before us, is the history of a rich merchant's son. The scene is laid chiefly

in Nijni Novgorod, the city of the great fair, on the banks of the Volga. And in the tale steamers with barges seem to be always passing at night up and down the Volga. The burdened Volga is never forgotten; it is constantly the theatre of crimes, seductions, and crises. Fomá's first love affair occurs on one of his father's steamers: a planned and mercenary *amourette*. "I am already thirty years old," says the shameless one, "the last days for a woman," and the pathos of that phrase sticks. Görki is at his best in such stark, crude, flesh-and-blood episodes. Fomá's father dies, and Fomá, at twenty or so, is master of a large fortune and a large business. What does he do? That is just the point. He does nothing, without knowing why he does nothing. "He sometimes became conscious of a certain bottomlessly profound, oppressive emptiness within himself, which nothing could fill—neither the impressions of the day just passed, nor the memory of days of yore; 'Change, and business affairs, and Madame Medijnsky—all were swallowed up in this gulf." He demands what life has to offer, and then cries: "Is there nothing better? Is that all there is in it?" He tries debauchery, though he has no gift for that career; he flings money away, and lets his business slip out of his hands. The most powerful influence, that of his shrewd godfather, Mayákin, proves absolutely ineffective. The following extract illustrates the relations of these two violently-opposite temperaments:

"Papa!" exclaimed Fomá. "Surely it can be done! You see, it has been done—men have abandoned all their possessions, and have saved themselves thereby . . ."

"Not in my time—nobody whom I know intimate'y!" said Mayákin, severely. "If they had—I'd have shown them!"

Gradually Fomá sinks into aimless, joyless vice. He loses his self-control. And yet he never ceases his Quest; he never discards his intense, secret spirituality. The fraud of things in general becomes more and more apparent to him. "O you rascals," he at length bursts out to the detested merchant-class, his own class, "What have you made? You have not made life, but a prison . . . You have not established order—but you have forged chains on men . . . It's close, suffocating, there's no place for a living soul to turn . . . Man is perishing! You are murderers . . . Do you understand that you are alive only through the long-suffering of mankind?" In the end, shabby, dishevelled, half-witted, still seeking, he goes about solitary, and if perchance people speak to him they say, contemptuously: "Come, now, a few words about doomsday, won't you?"

It is a purely spiritual drama, with a significance not too clear, put into a complex and highly-picturesque setting of modern Russian life. Nijni Novgorod, with its multifarious activities, its merchants, writers, workers, drunkards, wantons, flirts, simple girls, pilgrims, is pictured in a thousand moods—and, somehow, always ferociously, violently, crudely. It is as if the author felt the necessity of living up to his pseudonym. The "pose" is constantly observed. As thus: "There is not on the earth a more disgusting and repulsive man than the one who bestows alms, as there is not a more unhappy man than he who accepts it!" (We have there a specimen of the translator's irritating infelicity.) An ambitious novel it is, but not a successful one. The final effect is one of turgidity and shrillness. At times Görki displays extraordinary psychologic insight and documentary knowledge; but as often as not he is obviously writing out of the fulness of a noisy ignorance. He appears as an author who had never learnt literary manners, and who despised manners of any sort. *Fomá Gordyéeff* might be the production of a mature talent essentially crude and melodramatic in its dealings with the soul; on the other hand, it might be the early effort of a talent whose real fineness

had yet to emerge, clean, quiet, and self-reliant out of the welter of youthful extravagance and bombast.

The latter hypothesis is supported by the more austere excellence of *The Orloff Couple*. This tale, a very short novel, is by far the best thing of Görki's that has reached England. The miserable, quarrelsome, and yet vigorous life led by Orloff, the cobbler, and his wife in their single underground room is described with a poetic fidelity that knows all and leaves nothing out; the quarrels, especially, are done to perfection. One feels that here, at any rate, in this large tenement house, full of industry, superstition, squalor, vice, and goodwill, Görki is absolutely at home. Orloff goes exactly the same way as Fomá Gordyéeff: why, even himself cannot at all understand. He demands something which life will not yield to him. One would have thought the service of humanity in a hospital might satisfy him. But no. He takes to the road, disgusted with the universe. "I never managed to do anything heroic after all. But I still feel the intense desire to do something out of the common . . . Something that would give me the right to say to them all, 'You reptiles, you! What are you living for? And how are you living? You are a set of hypocrites and rogues, and nothing else!'" And we leave him in the vodka-shop. "As one glanced at the dark interior it appeared like the huge jaws of a giant, slowly but surely swallowing up, one after another, these poor, wretched Russian souls . . . Loth the restless and the quiet alike . . ."

It is too early yet to arrive at any definite conclusion about Maxime Görki. He has a luxuriant, unchastened imagination. He has also an intense sympathy with nature, and with those primitive moods of man which come nearest to nature. The passionate descriptions of the sea and of the daring sea-flirtation in *Malva*, a story otherwise of little merit, give ample proof of this quality. He has, further, an almost unique acquaintance with the folk-mind. In writing he can often strike the true lyric note. On the other hand, he lacks artistic culture. It occurs to us that he may be a man who despises culture and despises art, as the appanage of the rich, the comfortable, and the self-satisfied. His sympathy with the poor is so strong that he has no justice for the rest of mankind. He is wanting in quietude and kindness. Even his love for the oppressed is a brutal and scornful affection. His criticism of life is destructive, and no doubt his heroes reiterate the eternal Why because he himself is angrily seeking a philosophy of existence. He has rediscovered the sorrow of the world, and is imperiously demanding a solution of the enigma. At thirty, one may do so. At forty, one has either learnt the wisdom of history, or one is incurable.

The Muffin Man.

Vague Genius of the square and street!
Who marks his coming or retreat?
Anon some area-tripping maid
Involves him in a moment's trade,
Some housewife drops, with simper bland,
A cautious twopence in his hand. . . .
His bell! Again, again, again
It steals upon an idle brain,
Till life, enchanted, seems to swoon
To one long London afternoon.
Faint pulse of Time in London's ear,
Yet type of all her Now and Here,
Survivor still of every knell,
How wisely drones the Muffin Bell!
And he, who eyes each door askance,
Is sealed a priest of Circumstance.

W. W.

Things Seen.

The Home-Coming.

He had fought for England, and had suffered some injury, which made him a hopeless cripple. Yet he was still a strong and splendid man to look at; he bore a name men swear by; and he played his part in the world with a splendid courage. The conditions of life in those parts were unlike those which prevail in most places: circumstance ordered it that every man should have as many changes of fortune as the most inveterate of gamblers, and yet nobody was ever wealthy, except the Squire. He was rich, and he used his riches finely for the benefit of those among whom he lived. So there was sorrow everywhere when the news came that he was ill in London. In a day or two it was told that he could scarcely be expected to recover, and later messages were still more serious. The summer was at its height; the bell-heather had just covered the moorland by the sea, while the pale purple orchids were still beautiful. It seemed hard that he should die at such a season, and so far away from the corner of England he loved. One day a rumour ran through the town, and the people rejoiced, though the sadness that had dwelt on them was at the same time intensified. The Squire was coming home that day. At night the rooks were calling in the plantation above the station, and a great crowd gathered and stood silently waiting. The express steamed up to the platform. There was a long pause. Then he was brought on a stretcher to the splendid carriage that awaited him, and his lady took her seat beside him. The carriage was driven slowly through the town, and away to his beautiful house, with the woods around it, and the view of the sea from the windows of the rooms that were his own. Nobody spoke until long after he had gone by. On the day that followed he sat in a great chair, and looked out at the sea as the sun was setting. And he grew sleepy, so that his servant covered him with warm wraps, and retired to the back-ground. It was nine o'clock before a messenger galloped into the town, and we knew that he was dead.

Rus in Urbe.

THE bustle of the crowded platform swept by them, passengers, laden trucks, hurrying porters, and the two little calves covered in closer against one another from the strangeness of the situation, thrusting out their moist, creamy muzzles at the passing folk, and straining ineffectually at the confining rope.

Every now and again, as they rubbed together, the sprawling legs became inextricably mixed, and they fell over upon the heap of sacks at one side; then balance was regained with difficulty, and maintained by a determined straightening of awkward forelegs. We watched them from our waiting train—they were such clumsy, ridiculous young creatures, red as mother earth, with curly, wrinkled necks! They sniffed frequently and disdainfully, poking their damp noses forward in search of the absent, maternal meal.

A man approached stealthily from their rear, and with a sudden, dexterous movement, slipped a sack over the hind-quarters of the nearer one, before our surprised young friend knew himself he disappeared with his four long legs ignominiously huddled pell-mell in the encasing depths. A similar effort, and two wriggling bundles lay alongside on a truck, from each of which protruded a small, red head, with astonished, disgusted eyes.

"How cruel—how exceedingly cruel. I am sure it must hurt the poor mites!" the lady opposite me waxed indignant as we steamed away. "I wonder that the S.P.C.A. does

not interfere and stop that sort of thing. It ought not to be allowed!" She regarded me with stern disapproval as I laughed at the last sight of our friends being trundled away, with labels tied unto their necks. They were so absurdly aggrieved, for all the world like a couple of school-boys victimised by a fluke.

Humour in Malory.

A RECENT reading of Malory in the dainty edition of the *Temple Classics* pricks me to write some few words in his praise, in the hope that they may catch the notice of some who have not yet known him, and send them forthwith to the fountain-head, "Morte D'Arthur" itself.

To call Malory a humorist of the first order is perhaps a trifle paradoxical, for truly none are more devoutly and supremely serious than he. Yet therein lies the humour; for this very devoutness, this grand seriousness, this superb unconsciousness of absurdities, yields for the sceptical modern most exquisite diversion. The absolute belief in the events narrated which is stamped upon every line of the book, the august air of history with which each impossible episode is surrounded, have a cumulative effect far more subtle than any conscious humorist could have designed. Chapter V. of Book V. is a masterpiece of unconscious humour. The title runs: "How a man of the country told to him (Arthur) of a marvellous giant, and how he fought and conquered him." Arthur hears of a "great giant which had slain, murdered, and devoured much people of the country, and had been sustained seven years with the children of the commons of that land, insomuch that all the children be all slain and destroyed. . . ." and who, further, "had lately captured and slain horribly the fair Duchess of Brittany." As properly became a great knight of adventure, Arthur burns for his destruction, and cries to his informant: "Canst thou bring me thereas this giant haunteth?" Being directed, he ascends, dauntless and alone, up a hill till he comes to a great fire, and there finds "a careful widow, wringing her hands and making great sorrow, sitting by a grave new made." She details the murder of the Duchess, and warns him: "Beware! Approach him not too nigh, for he hath vanquished fifteen Kings, and hath made him a coat full of precious stones, embroidered with their beards, which they sent him to have his love for salvation of their people at this last Christmas." Arthur scorns her fearful words, and goes forth by the crest of the hill till he sees where the giant

sat at supper gnawing on a limb of a man, baking his broad limbs by the fire, and breechless, and three fair demosels turning three broaches whereon were broached twelve young children late born, like young birds. When King Arthur beheld that piteous sight he had great compassion on them, so that his heart bled for sorrow, and hailed him, saying in this wise: "He that all the world wieldeth give thee short life and shameful death; and the devil have thy soul. Why hast thou murdered these young, innocent children and murdered this duchess? Therefore, arise and dress thee, thou glutton, for this day shalt thou die of my hand." Then the glutton anon started up and took a great club in his hand, and smote at the King that his coronal fell to the earth. And the King hit him again that he carved his belly . . . that his guts and his entrails fell down to the ground. Then the giant threw away his club and caught the King in his arms that he crushed his ribs. Then the three maidens kneeled down and called to Christ for help and comfort of Arthur. And then Arthur weltered and wrung, that he was other while under and another time above. And so weltering and wallowing they rolled down the hill till they came to the sea-mark, and ever as they so weltered Arthur smote him with his dagger.

This, though necessarily somewhat spoilt by partial quotation, will serve to show what I mean. Here we have

an impossible episode told with magnificent veracity, skilfully heightened by the introduction of true touches of tragedy, such as: the careful widow sitting by a grave new made; the piteous offering by the fifteen Kings of their beards to save their people from the clutches of the giant; the twelve young children, late born, like young birds; the great compassion of Arthur; the three damosels kneeling down and calling to Christ for help and comfort of Arthur. Yet also with magnificently unconscious humour, as when Arthur cries to the giant: "He that all the world wieldeth give thee short life and shameful death," adding as an after-thought, "And the devil have thy soul"; his calling to the glutton to arise and dress, whereupon the "glutton anon started up and took a great club in his hand," which is only the least one would expect a giant to do in such circumstances, Arthur's idea that he should dress first being evidently a trifle too punctilious for so uncivilised a monster; the King's method of carving; the manner in which Arthur "weltered and wrung, that he was other while under and another time above," which expresses the whole situation admirably; and finally as "weltering and wallowing they rolled down the hill, while ever as they so weltered Arthur smote him with his dagger." Is not that weltering and wallowing and smiting as they rolled down the hill a superb last scene of this comic nightmare? Arthur, of course, is not a whit the worse when he reaches the bottom, although the giant has given up the ghost; he even has the temerity to say: "This was the fiercest giant that ever I met with, save one in the Mount of Araby, which I overcame, but this was greater and fiercer"—a bold statement which in these days would scarcely be accepted, even from a King, without further evidence, yet given here with quiet seriousness, as if it could not be disputed.

The quaint phrases and the often irresistibly comic usage of words which have in this day evolved to a far different meaning are very largely contributory to this unconscious humour. Words and phrases which in Malory's time were current serious coin strike one now as comic to the last degree. For instance, the chapter heading, "How Merlin was assotted and doated on one of the ladies of the lake, and how he was shut in a rock under a stone, and there died," cannot but raise a smile in anyone possessing the faintest trace of humour. Yet probably in the fifteenth century it was the correctly solemn phrase to say a man was assotted and doated, even as it is now to say that a man is passionately in love. The idea is the same: it is merely a question of clothes; the tragic robes of yesterday are the clown's wardrobe of to-day.

Yet these old clothes of Malory's are one of the great secrets of his charm. Divest him of his ancient picturesque habiliments, and garb him in the modern frock-coat and top hat—in a word, translate him into English of to-day—and you kill the charm. He degenerates into a mere storyteller, often wearisome and reiterative, vastly deficient in humour, unnecessarily fond of slaughter, and prodigal of impossible miracles. But clothed in his own clothes, and in his right mind, he is a grand tonic for this ultra-civilised twentieth century. Open his book where you will, and you will get rare whiffs of mediæval breezes, surpassing ever (dare I say it?) those dispensed so liberally by Mr. Hewlett. Malory is a great master of atmosphere. Reading his book, you are transported back over the ages to the mysterious forests wherein were ever knights in search of damosels and adventures (generally one and the same thing then), and ever finding them. So consummate is his art that impossibles become possibles, absurdities become realities, fairy-tales become history, as the imagination is wafted on the ancient winds. Let but the old winds drop, however, or do you refuse to be wafted upon them, and the impossibilities become superbly impossible, the absurdities triumphantly absurd, the fairy-tales magnificently mendacious. Either way you will find diverting amusement.

Truly, however, I have been a little unfair to Malory in treating him so lightly. He is serious with himself. Let us be serious a moment in his company. What great scorn would he have of us moderns? We who never risk our lives for our ladies' love; we who calculate and scheme to the uttermost before we dare foot forward into any high adventure, and then go not for the sake of the venture, but for sordid mercenary gain; we who shake and shudder at the sight of blood shed in open, glorious fight; we who are too fearful to defend the weak; we who cringe servilely before the mightiness of the wealthy, though in their dungeons groan a multitude of captives grinding out gold from their lives; we who cover sins not to be spoken of for very shame under the fair mantle of hypocrisy! O would he not scorn us? And do we not scorn ourselves a little as we read of the old militant ideals, the old forgotten chivalries?

The Great Question.

A Little Monologue.

THE poet, whatever his name (let us say Mrs. Gallup), who asked, "What's in a name?" took at that moment too little count of human nature in general and American nature in particular. Almost everything (Mr. Max Beerholm to the contrary) is in some names, and a great deal in all. Names control actions, decide destinies. How could Ravachol have done anything but nourish and advance red anarchy? How could Sipido have succeeded? It was the unavoidable fate of Czolgosz to come to the executioner's hands, of Succi to fast, of Gladstone to uphold the Church, of Cinquevalli to juggle beyond credibility. These are decreed matters. To think of Ravachol as a joyous equilibrist is as impossible as to imagine a Spooner as Prime Minister. How could a Daniel Lambert be thin, or a Bernhardt a Mildmay Deaconess? and if Mrs. Gallup has her way, how can we ever speak of "Bacon's 'Midsummer Night's Dream'?" The very resistance of the tongue is argument enough against this Transatlantic heresy. The name governs.

Yet, assuming for a moment that Mrs. Gallup wins, what will be the result? Will America, having brought the thing home to its darling Verulam, at last begin to read him, dropping *When Knighthood was in Flower*, and other home-grown humour and romance, for that purpose? If so, we might let the Swan go, since we should have the plays just the same. But probably there would be across the water only a shout of triumph and a hastening of the Gallups towards further mysteries. Bacon enthroned and Shakespeare degraded, they would want the readjustment of other bubble reputations. How could Burns, that solitary ploughman, write poetry? Surely it was Sir Walter Scott? or Sir James Mackintosh?

"Since we should have the plays just the same." But should we? That disregards the power of the name. Given Mrs. Gallup's theory, how should we view our ancient *Pride of Avon*? Between mortification at the loss of William and unwillingness to accept the versatility of Francis (who wins no hearts, nor ever will), would not the plays fall to the ground? It is more than likely we should be piqued, and that is very hard of healing; which tends to show how very much there is in a name. After all these years we could hardly come to "Love's Labour's Lost" again were it by another, nor even were it anonymous. The battle is not between Shakespeare and Bacon, but (such is human nature and sensitiveness) between Shakespeare and contempt.

And children must be very careful into what families they are born.

V. V. V.

Correspondence.

Rights in Gravitation.

SIR,—As Mr. Wells says he never heard of me or my book, I accept his statement unreservedly, and wish to express my regret for any annoyance that may have been given him by my letter, the intention of which, however, was not to charge him with conscious imitation. But I must ask your permission to deny that I abused your columns by the introduction of an advertisement in the guise of an ostensibly genuine letter to the editor, and to support that denial circumstantially.

The salient features in the first nine chapters of *A Plunge into Space* are:—The supposititious discovery of the secret of gravitation—The manufacture of a structure to exploit this—The building of the machine in the form of a sphere—The arrangement for renewing the air while the sphere was flying through space—The start from the earth—The flight through space, and the appearance of the firmament when outside the earth's atmosphere—The anxiety as to being able to breathe Martian air—The comic effect of lighter gravity on a smaller planet, &c.

The features in the opening chapters of *The First Men in the Moon*, which might seem to some to offer points of similarity, are:—The supposititious discovery of the secret of gravitation—The manufacture of a structure to exploit this—The building of the machine in the form of a sphere—The arrangement for renewing the air while the sphere was flying through space—The start from the earth—The flight through space and the appearance of the firmament when outside the earth's atmosphere—The anxiety as to being able to breathe Lunar air—The comic effect of lighter gravity on a smaller planet, &c.

When two or more writers are working on the same general theme there will obviously be some similarity in the choice of incidents, and this similarity will often be of phrase as well as fact. For example, where I describe a detail: "By a simple device of double doors any . . . article can be expelled with only a trifling loss of air," Mr. Wells gives the same as: "An airtight manhole is all that is needed . . . so that things may be thrown out, if necessary, without much loss of air." Even when the themes are totally different, the same writers will often show points of similarity. Thus, in a short story, "In the Abyss," by Mr. Wells in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1896, the sphere comes in under very different conditions. The illustrations of this particular sphere, indeed, reminded me of the picture of the sphere in my frontispiece. I hope I have expressed that with sufficient modesty. I certainly do not wish to evoke another accusation from the artist, even though it may carry with it another advertisement. If in this story Mr. Wells had not made his diving-bell a sphere, and called it a sphere, and if the illustrations had not reminded me of my sphere, no other similarity would have struck me, for none such would have existed. The one sphere was sunk in the sea; the other was plunged into space.

It would serve no purpose to pursue this unduly, but I hope I have said enough to prove that my object in writing to you in the first instance was to forestall any charge of writing conscious imitations of Mr. Wells into the new edition of my book. What could any critic, who, like Mr. Wells, had never heard of me or my first edition, say? And surely there must be many such. The foregoing explanation would sooner or later be demanded. I have given it now, and am glad to be done with it, albeit at the charge of unworthy advertisement, the value of which Mr. Wells possibly overrates.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT CROMIE.

Bacon and Another.

SIR,—Some while since, before Mrs. Gallup's cypher and Mr. Mallock's article had given fresh impetus to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy, I was re-reading the delectable *Essays or Counsels* of Lord Verulam, and was again forcibly struck by the intensely shrewd and practical tone of them. Not for a moment does Bacon lose sight of the utilitarian aspect of any subject of which he treats. It is noticeable, also, that the Essays on subjects which would admit of poetical treatment—e.g., those entitled "Of Death" and "Of Beauty"—are amongst the shortest in the volume. On the other hand, a subject like Usury receives quite lengthy treatment, and the Essays on subjects of Statecraft are of very considerable length—e.g., those entitled "Of Empire," "Of Counsel," and "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms."

All the essays show a remarkable insight into life, but it is the insight of the judge and the statesman, *not* of the poet. "Two words," says Macaulay, "form the key of the Baconian doctrine—Utility and Progress." Did ever a great poet set up either of these ideas as his ideal?

What the new explorations into cyphers may bring forth we cannot say, but it seems impossible to me that we shall discover that the enlightened philosopher, the shrewd judge, and the hard-headed statesman was veritably the author of Shakespeare's plays. Cyphers apart, is it conceivable that the author of the *Novum Organum* could also have been the creator of "Hamlet" and of "A Midsummer Night's Dream"?—Yours, &c.,

Turf Club, Cairo.

PERCY L. BABINGTON.

Prehistoric.

SIR,—I notice in your issue of the 28th inst. a review of an American translation of Dr. Jæger's *Life of Henrik Ibsen*, the first sentence of which runs as follows: "This book, which, we believe, has not yet been issued in England, was written by Henrik Jæger, the Norwegian critic, for Ibsen's sixtieth birthday."

May I be allowed to say that I published in 1890 an authorised English translation of Dr. Jæger's life, which was reviewed in your issue of November 8 of the same year. The body of the book was translated by Mrs. Clara Bell, and the Norwegian verse was done into English by Mr. Edmund Gosse.—Yours, &c.,

WM. HEINEMANN.

21, Bedford Street, London, W.C.

"The Thrush."

SIR,—The writer of the article "To What End," in your last issue, seems to me to be very hard to please in the way of verse!

The specimen on Tolstoy which he quotes I should call very well and lucidly written, and much above the average of up-to-date verse. The diction, moreover, is poetical, and the lines read smoothly enough.

I am not concerned to defend the *Thrush*, whose restrictions as to competitors seem absurd. You have to state your condition (!), your nationality, and I know not what beside; but the Tolstoy lines seem an unfortunate specimen for adverse criticism.

How few men write musical and thoughtful verse to-day—verse that "sticks," and haunts the memory! When poets come to this the sooner they publish the better! Heaps of folk can write doggerel, as your critic says; but really musical and telling verses are comparatively rare, even to day.—Yours, &c.,

F. B. D.

Our Weekly Competition.

Result of No. 119 (New Series).

Last week we offered a prize of One Guinea for the best humorous lines on the year 1902, rhyming with two throughout. We award the prize to Mr. F. E. Walrond, 168, Tachbrook Street, S.W., for the following:

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWO.

In nineteen-hundred-and-two
The world will be nothing new;
For grass will grow as it always grew,
And winds will blow as they always blew,
And lawyers cheat both me and you,
And lovesick lads write billets-doux,
And Frenchmen swear by dog and blue,
And parsons wrangle on points of view,
And poets sing as they love to do
Of Spring and Summer and dawn and dew,
In nineteen-hundred-and-two.

In nineteen-hundred-and-two
The world will be nothing new;
For literary maidens will steadfastly chew
The ends of their pens in attempts to imbue
Their creamy-white paper with "wild dreams of Kew,"
With monsters and murders and crimes without clue:
And actors and playwrights will teach us anew
The ways of adultery and laws of taboo;
And rosy-cheeked dames will smilingly sue
For the coin that is justly and obviously due
To a heart that is broken by lover untrue,
In nineteen-hundred-and-two.

In nineteen-hundred-and-two
The world will be nothing new;
For the Commons will paddle their ancient canoe
With promises many, performances few,
And Rosebery furrow his field askew;
And Bannerman sit on his fence perdu;
And Salisbury "Pooh!" and Chamberlain woo
His critics abroad with the tongue of a shrew;
And Kitchener ask what the d—l to do,
When that rascal De Wet with his villainous crew
Will fade out of view, when the gentleman's cue
Were to sit in his laager and wait for the coup,
In (?) nineteen-hundred-and-two.

Other contributions are as follows:—

A REQUEST.

What shall we sue as a boon, I and you,
From the year that is new? A sky ever blue;
The rose, not the rug; friends, a rollicking crew;
All romance, like great Ku-bla's renowned Xanadu:
Every tempest taboo, from Cornwall to Corfu:
Nay, do not pooh-pooh these wishes so few,
Many-numbered, one thousand nine hundred and two!

A REPLY.

Perchance ye shall view not what ye woo:
A Maremma-like dew, where roses once grew;
Your pleasure burst through, as with horns of a gnu:
Full many a clue dropped, or tangled askew,
'Neath the shade of the gruesome dark boughs of the yew.
But be your hearts true, ye shall win your hearts' due,
Saith the year of the Lord nineteen-hundred-and-two.

[R. F. McC., Whitby, Yorks.]

[TIME: Midnight. SCENE: Man's Room. Hullabaloo heard in the Chimney. Man flings up a Shoe, thinking to see a Cat fall. Down comes—who?]

MAN (*speaks*): Why, bless my soul, it's you!
I might have known your view-halloo.
It's like your cheek, you young Yahoo!
There, no offence meant! How d'ye do?
Don't stand and stare me through and through!
What? You're a stranger? . . . Come, that's too
Shameless a fib! A stranger? Pooh!
It's just twelve months ago since you
Last came to call. . . You swear it's true
You've never been before? . . . Jeru-
salem! . . . Fact? . . . Well, I'm—shoo!
Call me at once a black Hindoo
If you are not the urchin who

Made this same spot a rendezvous
A year ago! . . . Well, young 'un, you
Want money, I'll bet. Not one sou
Shall I fork out. Go to Peru,
Or anywhere you like, but do
Take yourself off! . . . What's that? Beshrew
Your impudence! . . . You want my—who-o-o!
Good resolutions! *V'la, c'est tout!*
But—this—beats—all! Why, that kid, who
Was so amazingly like you,
Wormed out of me a vow to do
No end of good things, and to woo
All sorts of virtues, hitherto
Foreign to me. I knew I'd rue
The promises I rattled through.
I broke 'em—every jack one—too!
Now, I'll be hanged if you can screw
Another out of me! So you
Be off! Thief! *Ladro! Dieb! Filou!*
Klêra! Fur! (Wish I talked Urdu!)
Jove! He's decamped! . . . But down the flue
Comes fluttering a billet-doux:
"I'm the New Year, ONE-NINE-NOUGHT-TWO!"

[F. C., Worthing.]

Where is the self-confident soothsayer who,
In this year of grace, nineteen-hundred-and-two,
When taxes are many, remittances few,
And more than one applicant's tumbled askew,
Dare prophesy brightly and prophesy true?
(For to prophesy wrong we can all of us do!)
Will the Englishman rule or the Yellow Man-chu?
And what's to be done with the hungry Hindoo?
Will the Rand pay the bill or prefer to "renew"?
Is our motto to be "What's (a) mine's not for you"?
Has the Black Eagle hatched a commercial cuckoo
That will oust Cousin John and "Boss" Jonathan too?
Shall the farmers have torrents that soak the crops through,
Or won't the sun give the poor devils their dew?
For the Great Coronation who'll have the best view?
Will the King wear top boots or a Court-buckle shoe?
These are some of the boogies that haunt and pursue.
I don't think our prophet's job easy—do you?

[R. O. S., Kensington.]

Who'll tide us through
Nineteen-hundred-and-two?
What shall we do
With the Boer stew?
What is our cue
With the Pro-Boer too,
And all that crew
We so deeply rue?
And it's who, oh who,
Is the good man and true
That'll guide us through
The year that is new?
Be his politics of any hue,
As long as his heart is blue, true blue,
We don't care a sou,
Do you?

[A. F., Exmouth.]

Verses also received from: H. G. E. (Stockport); C. H. B. (Gateshead); G. H. H. (Putney); N. P. (S. Kensington); W. B. S. (London, N.W.); W. S. B. (Blackheath); R. O. S. (Kensington); W. T. B. (Manchester); F. L. W. (Bradford); E. M. S. (Ely); E. C. M. (Cork); J. E. B. (Ipswich); P. C. F. (London, E.); T. C. (Sussex); J. G. C. E. H. (Heidelberg); Mrs. S. (Chelsea); H. W. D. O. (Highgate); A. D. B. (Liverpool); E. C. M. D. (Crediton); E. L. (Didsbury); J. L. (Broughty Ferry).

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RULES.

Answers, addressed, "Literary Competition, THE ACADEMY, 43, Chancery Lane, W.C.," must reach us not later than the first post of Wednesday, January 8, 1902. Each answer must be accompanied by the coupon to be found on the second page of Wrapper, or it cannot enter into competition. Competitors sending more than one attempt at solution must accompany each attempt with a separate coupon; otherwise the first only will be considered. Contributions to be written on one side of the paper only.

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